

# LECTURES

ON THE

LORD'S PRAYER;

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WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,

By the Rev. *John Taprell* RICHARD TAPRELL,

OF SOUTH MOLTON.

Ἐρχεται νῦν, ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι.

*Whatsoever ye do, Do all to the Glory of God—in the Name of  
the Lord Jesus.*

1 Cor. x. 1. Col. iii. 17.

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MDCCXCH.



L E C T U R E S

ON THE

OF THE



INTRODUCED BY

THE HON. THE LORDS OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

AND THE HON. THE LORDS OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

AND THE HON. THE LORDS OF THE

CHURCH OF IRELAND

AND THE HON. THE LORDS OF THE

CHURCH OF WALES

AND THE HON. THE LORDS OF THE

CHURCH OF MAN

AND THE HON. THE LORDS OF THE

CHURCH OF JERSEY

FATHER OF ANGELS AND MEN,

GOD OF UNIVERSAL NATURE,

AUTHOR OF GRACE,

AND

GIVER OF GLORY,

TO THEE I HUMBLY DEDICATE

THIS BOOK ;

BESEECHING THEE TO PARDON WHATEVER IN IT IS  
WRONG,

TO ACCEPT SINCERE THANKS FOR WHAT IS RIGHT,

TO BLESS IT TO THE SPIRITUAL BENEFIT OF ALL  
THAT MAY READ IT,

AND TO FAVOUR ITS WRITER WITH THY  
APPROBATION ;

THAT BOTH HE AND HIS READERS MAY STAND WITH  
HONOUR BEFORE THY BAR,

" IN THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD,"

THROUGH THY DIVINE COMPASSIONS

AND

UNSPEAKABLE MERCY,

IN OUR BLESSED REDEEMER AND ADVOCATE  
JESUS CHRIST.

AMEN.

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*Prepare to meet thy God. Amos iv. 12.*

*If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Pet. iv. 18.*

*There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Rom. viii. 1.*

*To be carnally minded, is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace. Rom. viii. 6.*

*Search me, O God! and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be ANY wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.*

**T**HE following LECTURES on the LORD'S PRAYER have all been preached. They are now published with a view to general usefulness. But the Author flatters himself with the hope, that they may prove particularly beneficial to families, in which it may be judged prudent to read them in course.—In a few of them, especially towards the beginning, something like similarity of idea and expression will be perceived. This, from the nature of the subject, could not easily be avoided; and the learned reader knows how to make just allowance for it: while the unlearned will



*will find in it no small advantage. Truths which concern men's salvation, should not be passed over in haste. Benefit to Souls must not be sacrificed to conciseness of expression or elegance of diction. For general instruction, a useful sentiment had better be repeated several times, even in the same discourse, and almost in the same words, than with affected caution be mentioned but once.*

*As in this publication the Author has the good of families particularly in his eye, he hopes the Discourse which introduces the Lectures, will neither be thought unseasonable, nor prove unacceptable. The whole he now humbly and cheerfully commits to the Divine Blessing, for the welfare of mankind. And should he be so happy as to find, that the Good approve, the Bad are bettered, and God is honoured, he will think his pains well rewarded.*

SOUTH MOLTON, Jan. 21, 1792.

A N

## INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE  
THE LORD.

**T**O serve the Lord is the highest wisdom of man. To enjoy the favour of the Lord, and to possess his blessing, is the highest, is the only true, felicity of man. “ His favour “ is life, and his loving-kindness is better “ than life.” We are in his hands. We are at his disposal. If we love and serve him, he will bless and comfort us. If we neglect and offend him, he will rebuke and punish us. If, through faith in Christ, we make it the constant aim of life to do the things which are pleasing in his sight, he will at length exalt us to honour, and give us a place in his kingdom. But if we disregard the Lord our God, and are intent upon gratifying our un sanctified passions and appetites, we have reason to dread the Almighty as our judge,

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and

and to live in perpetual fear of his insupportable frown. If our conscience witness not for us, that we are faithfully devoted to God in heart, and that we intend by divine assistance to “serve him without fear, in holiness and “righteousness before him, all the days of “our life;” with terror of mind we have cause to contemplate HIM, who hath “all “power in heaven and in earth, and who is “able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

“But grace be with all them that love our “Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” Happy, inexpressibly happy is it for all those, who view Religion in a proper light. Who consider it not as a task, a burden, a drudgery, a hardship; but as the most “perfect freedom.” As a freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan; as a freedom from that wounded conscience, which none can composedly bear; as a freedom from ten thousand anxieties of life, from ten thousand overwhelming fears of death, and from condemnation in the day of judgment.

I am afraid that the nature of true religion is but little understood. Many appear to  
think

think too lightly of it : many appear to think too gloomily of it. The former flatter themselves that God will be easily reconciled to them, when they choose to turn to him; and to turn to him now, suits not their inclinations and pursuits; therefore they will defer thinking seriously of this matter, till they have taken their fill of pleasure, and sickness or debility shall warn them to prepare for the grave. .

Should there be present any of this description, I hope the following passage of scripture will tend to open their eyes, and deliver them from their delusion. “ Turn.  
 “ you at my reproof: behold, I will pour  
 “ out my spirit unto you; I will make  
 “ known my words unto you. Because I  
 “ have called, and ye refused; I have stretched  
 “ out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye  
 “ have set at nought all my counsel, and  
 “ would none of my reproof; I also will  
 “ laugh at your calamity; I will mock when  
 “ your fear cometh—when your fear cometh  
 “ as desolation, and your destruction cometh  
 “ as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish  
 b 2 “ cometh



“ cometh upon you. Then shall they call  
 “ upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall  
 “ seek me early, but they shall not find me :  
 “ for that they hated knowledge, and did not  
 “ chuse the fear of the Lord. They would  
 “ none of my counsel : they despised all my  
 “ reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the  
 “ fruit of their own way, and be filled with  
 “ their own devices\*.”

After hearing this, canst thou believe,  
 O man ! that a few sighs and groans ; a few  
 expressions of sorrow ; a few vain and inef-  
 fectual wishes of having done better ; a few  
 tears flowing from thy dim eyes, and moistening  
 thy pale cheek—Canst thou believe that these  
 things constitute true religion ? Yea, even  
 supposing an efficacy in these things—and I  
 believe you are convinced there is none—Are  
 you sure that you shall lie days or weeks on  
 a bed of sickness ? May you not be taken off  
 by a sudden stroke in the midst of all your  
 folly and wickedness ? “ For what is your  
 “ life ? Is it not even a vapour, which  
 “ appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth

\* Proverbs. chap. i.

“ away ?”

“away?” How know you what a day, an hour, a moment, may bring forth? Have you not lately been warned, awfully warned, of the great uncertainty of life? Was not one of this congregation, one whom you all knew, one whose place in this house of worship was seldom empty when the minister was in the pulpit; was not this fellow-worshipper of yours recently called, at an unexpected moment, to meet her judge\*? Does she not now say to you from the grave, “Be ye also ready, for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find watching.”

But suppose you should, as, perhaps, you presume you shall, sicken before you die.—Do you think that a few broken sentences offered to God in prayer, with a heart deeply depraved, a soul unsanctified, a body unfit any

\* This refers to the sudden death of one of the author's hearers, who went into the market in perfect health, April 30, 1791, dropped down, and in a few minutes expired.—May all who cast their eye on this, be careful to prepare for a like event!

longer

longer to serve sin, and a life full of guilt, will avail you any thing in a dying hour? “ Be  
 “ not deceived; God is not mocked: what-  
 “ soever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.  
 “ For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the  
 “ flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth  
 “ to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life  
 “ everlasting\*.”

But as there are some who think too lightly, so there are others who appear to think too gloomily, of religion. They fancy it wears a forbidding aspect, and they are afraid to approach it; or if they do approach, it is with a kind of horror. They are afraid to contract an intimacy with this their best friend; and the services they pay her, are often the services of trembling slaves, instead of the delightful homage of cheerful sons.

But what have you to fear, if you desire and endeavour to please God? “ Who is he that  
 “ will harm you, if ye be followers of that  
 “ which is good?” Surely, it must be the wisest of all mistakes, to think that God will.

\* Galatians, chap. vi.

If you love and fear him, he will be your Protector, your Comforter, and your Saviour. He invites you to him, that he may bless you ; that he may pardon you ; that he may purify you, and that he may bestow on you every needful favour for time and for eternity.

“ Godliness is profitable unto all things ;  
 “ having the promise of the life that now is,  
 “ and of that which is to come. Happy is  
 “ the man that findeth this true and heavenly  
 “ wisdom. The merchandise of it is better  
 “ than the merchandise of silver, and the gain  
 “ thereof than fine gold. She is more precious  
 “ than rubies ; and all the things thou canst  
 “ desire, are not to be compared unto her.  
 “ Length of days is in her right hand ; and in  
 “ her left hand, riches and honour. Her ways  
 “ are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths  
 “ are peace. She is a tree of life to them that  
 “ lay hold upon her ; and happy is every one  
 “ that retaineth her.”

“ In this was manifested the love of God  
 “ toward us, because that God sent his only-  
 “ begotten son into the world, that we might  
 “ live through him. Herein is love, not that  
 “ we



“ we loved God, but that he loved us, and  
 “ sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.  
 “ And every man that hath this hope in him  
 “ purifieth himself even as he is pure\*.”

“ Having therefore, brethren, boldness  
 “ to enter into the holiest by the blood of  
 “ Jesus, by a new and living way which he  
 “ hath consecrated for us, through the vail,  
 “ that is to say, his flesh; and having an high  
 “ priest over the house of God—Let us draw  
 “ near with a true heart, in FULL ASSU-  
 “ RANCE of faith, having our hearts sprinkled  
 “ from an evil conscience, and our bodies  
 “ washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the  
 “ profession of our faith without wavering,  
 “ for he is faithful that promised. And let us  
 “ consider one another to provoke unto love,  
 “ and to GOOD WORKS†.”

What then remains, but that we come to the resolution expressed in our text, and determine that from this hour we will serve the Lord? This is a resolution which well becomes every son and daughter of Adam.

\* 1 John iv. 9, 10.      † Hebrews x. 19.

And

And as we find it in the lips of a man who was an Householder, I take this opportunity of remarking, that all Masters of Families ought to consider themselves as bound to serve God in their houses, and to do all they can to save the souls of their children and servants. Happy would be the omen, and pleasing would be the prospect, were every master of a family to determine with Joshua, "As for ME and my "HOUSE, we will serve the LORD."

Never shall we see the rising generation what every good man wishes it, till private example co-operate with public instruction; till parents and masters unite their aids with the attempts of faithful ministers. Much we hope, with skilful management, and the divine blessing, from Sunday-schools; and much will it rejoice my heart, to see the present flattering prospect realized. To this end I have ventured to cast my mite\* into the great treasury of public assistance.

But notwithstanding this excellent institution, this promised Blessing to our nation and

\* See a little piece, entitled, A plain Discourse for Children, by the author.

the world, much remains to be done.— These little seminaries, called Sunday-schools, are not universal; they are chiefly designed for children; and there are multitudes of young persons who never did, who never can, enjoy the advantage of them. They were placed in laborious situations prior to the establishment of this humane and beneficent plan. To whom shall *such* look for daily instruction, but to those under whose care Providence has placed them? From whom shall they learn their duty to God and Man, but from those for whose temporal advantage they toil and spend their daily strength?

Many young persons dwell under the pleasing shade of parental protection. And from whose lips may they expect to receive the frequent moral lesson, and to derive that religious knowledge which is necessary to their being ornaments to the Church and to Society, but from theirs who are dignified with the high and honourable appellation of Parents?

And how shall our youth of various ranks and stations be regularly and properly taught, unless a regular and conscientious regard be paid

paid to family-devotion?—Parents! Masters! Guardians! you believe that your children, your servants, and all committed to your care, have immortal souls. And can you be less concerned for their Souls than for their Bodies? Can you bear to see these souls perish through ignorance and sin?—You believe that Christ hath died: and can you be unconcerned whether you and yours are saved by him or not? Is it to you a matter of indifference, whether his blood cleanse you from guilt, or rise in judgment against you for your neglect of the privileges you have enjoyed, and the omission of the duties you ought to have performed?—You believe that you must die—that you must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and solemn will be your account there. And have you no care how you shall then answer for your own conduct, and for the management of those for whose salvation, as well as for your own, it became you to watch and pray?

If these considerations are judged worthy of your attention, that is, if your own soul's happiness, and the happiness of others for  
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eternity,



eternity, are objects deserving your regard ; then it is to be hoped, you will be careful to worship God in your families ; you will set a good example to all around you ; you will endeavour to instil sentiments of piety, of purity, and of universal goodness into youthful minds ; you will teach all under your roof the necessity and advantage of “ keeping holy the sabbath-day ; ” you will be certain that they punctually attend on public worship ; you will familiarly explain to them in private what they do not understand ; you will read the Scriptures to them, and let some portion of God’s word enlighten, enliven, enforce, and sanctify the daily duties of the family ; and in this way you will each thus determine with Joshua—“ As for me, “ and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

I foresee the objection to this plan of conduct. You will say, “ We have not leisure. “ Our business will be neglected.” It is easy to answer—The business of the soul exceeds the business of the body, in the same proportion as eternity exceeds time. And when we come to die, we shall receive the full conviction that “ one thing is ” absolutely “ needful.”

But

But I pass over these considerations, so self-evident, and beg leave to remark, that I would have no man living be a greater advocate for well-regulated industry, than myself; nor shall any man more readily subscribe to this article, that idleness is sin. But I must be permitted to say, that it is an idea utterly devoid of foundation, to imagine that religion and industry in our secular affairs are incompatible. Never is business better conducted, never does business better prosper, than where God is intelligently, seriously, and faithfully worshipped. There dwells the blessing of God.—There love and affection dwell.—There is peace and order.—There are found prudent authority and cheerful submission.—There patience is seen under crosses, and humility adorns the greatest successes. A Throne of Grace is proved to be a sanctuary from trouble, and a pure source of ennobling joys to the devout soul. Hence issue those streams of sacred delight which create a disrelish for the polluted joys of sin, and impart some sweet foretaste of those pleasures which flow at the right hand of God for evermore.

With

With humility and affection would I intreat all heads of families, to use their best endeavours to prevail on their children and servants, and all under their care and authority, to walk in the paths of holiness and righteousness. And above all things, ye parents and rulers, be careful to set a holy example, such as your children, and all who observe your conduct, may at all times imitate with safety and with honour.

In your dying moments you will esteem the least good done to the meanest person within your influence, better than all the gain of life. All your gain, be it as much as it may, would you then gladly resign, for the sake of helping any one soul to love and fear God, and to prepare for heaven.—Be persuaded therefore to realize this solemn scene, this approaching season, “now while it is called to-day;” and act accordingly. And may yours be the pious rapture when you come to die, to see religious children, or religious servants, or both, surrounding your bed with countenances full of love and affection; and when you behold the big tear start from the speaking eye, may you also

also hear the voice of gratitude speak from the melting and overflowing heart, acknowledging, compensating, and doubly repaying, all your religious care, all your faithful rebukes, all your tender admonitions, all your wise instructions, and all your sweet encouragements; and blessing you as their pious Father, as their dearest Friend !

What is the wealth of the world compared with a satisfaction like this ? What pleasures may be supposed to equal it ? To die in such circumstances is to die with honour. And, thus supported, thus comforted, thus animated, the true Christian may well exclaim, with good old Simeon, “ Lord, now lettest thou “ thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes “ have seen thy salvation !”

And now, perhaps, you are ready to cry out, O “ let ME die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his !” I only add, that if you really desire this, and would obtain it, you must conscientiously live the life of the righteous. May the Lord help you so to do !

The



The duty of prayer is most plainly, as well as repeatedly, insisted on in Scripture. It is incumbent on all men, from the highest to the lowest, from the eldest to the youngest. It must not be the exercise of the Lord's day merely, but of every day.

Our Lord spake a parable to this end, "that  
 "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."  
 His apostle commands us, "to continue in-  
 "stant in prayer : to pray always, with all  
 "prayer and supplication in the spirit ; and to  
 "watch thereunto with all perseverance ;"  
 and "to pray without ceasing." Jesus Christ  
 solemnly commands his followers, "to watch  
 "and pray, that they enter not into temp-  
 "tation."

If we would receive spiritual blessings from God, we must pray for them. If we would be truly religious, we must beseech God to make us such, by his Grace and Spirit. And no man can fully declare all the advantages of true religion.—Art thou a *husband*? It will help thee to behave thyself properly in that relation. Art thou a *parent*? It will engage thee

thee to train up thy child “in the nurture  
 “and admonition of the Lord.” Art thou a  
*master*? It will prevent thy behaving improperly  
 in that character. Thou wilt be kind, compas-  
 sionate and forbearing, remembering that “your  
 master also is in heaven.”—Art thou a *child*?  
 Religion will teach thee to “obey thy parents  
 in the Lord,” and to love and honour them in  
 thine heart.—Art thou a *servant*? Religion will  
 teach thee submission. It will deliver thee from  
*eye-service*, and make thee faithful and cheerful.  
 —Art thou *rich*? Religion will not suffer thee  
 to be high-minded, nor to trust in *uncertain*  
*riches*, but in the *living God*; while it will teach  
 thee to do good with thy substance, and to com-  
 municate of thy bounty to the necessitous; with  
 which “work God is well pleased.”—Art thou  
*poor*? Religion will make thee industrious, humble,  
 patient, contented, and resigned to thy Father’s  
 will. It will make thee “rich in faith and  
 “good works,” and help thee to “lay up  
 “treasure in heaven.”

Whatever situation thou art in, O man!  
 the religion of Jesus Christ, shouldest thou be

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to happy as to understand and practise it, will make thee what thou oughtest to be. It will make thee "a man of God." It will put thee upon improving thy time in the best manner. It will make thee **UNIVERSALLY HONEST**. Thou wilt learn to work the works of God with pleasure. Thou wilt learn to rejoice in God as thy portion. Thou wilt learn to trust in God as thy eternal shield. And when thou hast done all that the Spirit of God shall enable thee to do, thou wilt still be small in thine own eyes, and acknowledge that thou art "an unprofitable servant." Thy dependence for justification and salvation will be placed on the mercy of God, through a Redeemer; believing, that "the gift of God is "eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord\*." In this course, thou wilt condemn the wicked world—thou wilt adorn the doctrine of God thy Saviour—thou wilt tread the path to heaven—in the last great day thou wilt stand with honour before the Son of Man—and when the earth, and the things that are therein, shall be burnt up, then shalt thou shine before the Throne of God, in glory everlasting.

\* Rom. vi. 23.

These are such of the advantages attending true religion as are easy to be named and sure to be enjoyed : but the full import, the rich and boundless significance of them, we are unable as yet fully to understand. That we may know in due time, let us now make our earnest and frequent prayer to God. He that lives without prayer, lives “without God in “the world.” And had I but one tear, I would drop it over that man who “knows not “God, and obeys not the Gospel of our Lord “Jesus Christ.”

I hope the following Discourses will be blessed to many families, and to numerous individuals. Usefulness is the end for which they are printed ; and this is the only apology I have to offer for exposing them to the public eye. May the God of heaven make them useful ; and may their writer and their readers meet together in glory, through his infinite mercy in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*



## LECTURE I.

MATTHEW vi. 9.

OUR FATHER.

**I**N this chapter our blessed Lord sharply reproves hypocrisy, and particularly that hypocrisy which makes an ostentatious shew of religion, with a view to deceive Men and mock God. He warns his followers “not to be as the hypocrites are, who love “to pray standing in the synagogues, and in “the corners of the streets, that they may be “seen of men :” for the praise of men is all the reward, all the benefit or advantage, they shall ever derive from their forced, their unnatural and un sanctified devotions.

Our Lord also exhorts his disciples not to “use vain repetitions, in their prayers, as the “heathens do, who think that they shall be “heard for their much speaking. Be not ye  
 B “therefore



“ therefore like unto them,” said the blessed Jesus : “ for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye.”—Here follows that comprehensive form of words which has been used by Christians, more or less, I suppose, from the day it was first uttered by their Saviour ; and from the circumstance of its being delivered by Christ unto his disciples, it has obtained the name of “ the Lord’s Prayer.”—Though it cannot reasonably be supposed that Christ meant to confine his people always to this form, and allowed them not to pray, but in these identical words ; yet, on the other hand, there is sufficient reason to believe, that he designed this prayer as the model, or pattern, of their prayers, in general.

These things being premised, I shall now proceed to consider a small part of the prayer itself. The two first words will engage the attention of this hour, and furnish out sufficient matter for our present meditation. In this, and in all our future attempts to improve by this Divine Prayer, may the Holy Spirit vouchsafe

vouchsafe his heavenly teachings to our minds, and may the blessing of Almighty God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be with us all.  
*Amen.*

“After this manner therefore pray ye : Our “Father.” In discoursing on these words, I shall shew more generally in what senses God may be said to be a Father—how he is Our Father—what he has a right to require of us in consequence of that august character—what his obedient children may humbly expect from him—and then, conclude with a short improvement.

I. I shall attempt to shew more generally in what senses the character, or appellation, in the text, belongs to God.

And the Almighty may justly be called Father, as he is the Creator of the Universe. In the first chapter of Genesis, Moses, from whom we have the history of the Creation, informs us, that “In the beginning God “created the heaven and the earth. And the “earth was without form, and void, and

“darkness was upon the face of the deep.”  
 “And God said let there be light : and there  
 “was light.” “And God made the firmament;  
 “and God called the firmament Heaven.”

In this sense God may be called a Father, as he is the Creator or Producer of the World. And in this sense it is intimated in the thirty-eighth of Job, at the twenty-eighth verse, that the “rain has a Father.”

The character in the text belongs to God also as he is the Creator of Angels, and all the high and happy orders of the celestial world. They all derive their existence from him, and are, equally with the meanest of his creatures, dependent upon him. And in this sense the Great Lord of All may be properly called Father. But in the text we are taught to address him as “Our Father :” I therefore pass on to shew,

II. How we are to consider him as our Father, for in that relation he seems more precious to us. And when we come to speak of God as the Father of Mankind, several senses

senses present themselves, in which he supports that pleasing character. The first, the most natural, and the most obvious, is that in which he is the Father of the material world: that is, by bringing us from a state of non-entity into Being, and making, by his Almighty Power, something as it were of nothing.

The second sense, in which God is our Father, is that in which he is the Father of Angels; and that is, by giving us Immortal Spirits, in these our Mortal Bodies. In the account which Moses gives us of the formation of man, in the second chapter of the book of Genesis, he tells us, that “the Lord God  
“breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;  
“and man became a living soul.”

The following passages take in both these ideas. “Now, O Lord, thou art our Father:  
“we are the clay, and thou art the potter, and  
“we all are the work of thy hand\*.” “Have  
“we not all one Father? Hath not one God  
“created us†?” “We have had fathers of  
“our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave

\* Isai. lxiv. 8.    † Mal. ii. 10.



“ them reverence : shall we not much rather  
 “ be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits,  
 “ and live\*?

The third sense, in which God may be called the Father of Mankind, is that in which he provides for them, and nourishes them. He openeth his liberal hand, and supplieth the wants of every living thing. We are all pensioners upon the Divine Bounty, and live continually upon the provision of our heavenly Father. But alas ! how few amongst us lay this seriously to heart ! There is a remarkable passage to this purpose in the second chapter of Hosea. Speaking of the body of the Jewish people, probably, the Lord saith, “ She did not “ know,” or did not consider, “ that I gave “ her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied “ her silver and gold, which they prepared for “ Baal. Therefore will I return, and take “ away my corn in the time thereof, and my “ wine in the season thereof, and will recover “ my wool and my flax, given to cover her “ nakedness.” And we have great reason to bless God, that, for our multiplied trans-

\* Heb. xii. 9.

gressions,

gressions, he hath not smitten our land with barrenness, and our bodies with disease and death.

The fourth sense, in which God may be called the Father of Mankind, is that in which he governs the world, and superintends our mean affairs. A good King is the Father of his people. God is the King of the whole earth. His sovereign sway is universal, and his kingdom is from everlasting to everlasting. And all his people, in all places of his dominion, are ruled by him for their good.

The last sense I shall name, and the highest which can be named, in which God is the Father of Men, is his being a reconciled God and Father to believers, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. This, though a limited, is by far the noblest, sense.

To some this may possibly need explanation, It will be proper therefore to observe, that to be a Man and to be a Christian, may be as widely different as the two acts of Creation and Redemption. By the former we are Men ;

by the latter only can we be Christians. And, to say nothing about those who have never been favoured with the Gospel, for my business is not with them, there are multitudes who are not only blessed with Bibles in their houses, but also have the Gospel frequently sounded in their ears, who never feel its power upon their hearts, nor express its purity in their lives; and therefore they are not Christians. If a man's being called a Christian would make him such, then the disciples of Mahomet and the unbelieving Jews might easily be made Christians.

But however it fares with others, we are assured from God himself, that where the Gospel is preached, he will be the Saviour of none, but such as believe and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. Though he is the Father of Men by Creation and Providence; yet if he is not also their Father through a Mediator, where a Mediator is revealed, his being their Father by Creation will avail them nothing. In this sense he is the Father of the visible heavens and the earth, which are inanimate substances, and consequently incapable of happiness.

happinefs. As the Creator, then, let it be understood, that God is the Father of all Men: and, as fuch, “ he maketh his fun to  
 “ rife on the evil and on the good, and fendeth  
 “ rain on the juft and on the unjuft.” But confidered as the Saviour of poor Sinners, he is the Father only of the believing, the penitent, the humble, and the obedient. On men, as creatures, he beftows temporal good things; fuch as houfes and lands, gold and filver, and on the meaneft of them, in general, food and raiment: but on thofe among mankind that are Chriftians in deed and in truth, God beftows not temporal good things merely, but alfo thofe which are fpiritual and eternal; fuch as pardon of fin, the fanctification of their nature, the juftification of their perfons, in this world; and in the world to come, life everlafting, through Jefus Chrift, our Lord.

That the diftinction I have now made, obtains in Scripture, and is clearly marked out by the f acred writers, I fhould hope no careful reader of the Bible can be ignorant. We are exprefsly told, that “ as many as received  
 “ Chrift, to them gave he power,” or privilege\*,

\* Ἐξουσίαν.



or dignity, "to become the sons of God; even  
 "to them that believe on his name\*." In  
 agreement with this, the Apostle to the Gala-  
 tians says of Christ's being sent into this  
 world, that it was "to redeem them that were  
 "under the law; that we," we who believe  
 and obey, "might receive the adoption of  
 "Sons. And because ye are Sons," says he to  
 his fellow-christians, "God hath sent forth  
 "the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying,  
 "Abba, Father†." The same Apostle marks  
 the distinction more clearly. He tells us,  
 that "to be carnally-minded is death; but to  
 "be spiritually-minded is life and peace‡."  
 "So then," says he, "they that are in the  
 "flesh cannot please God§."

Now to be "in the flesh," is to be mere  
 men; having no grace in the heart, no love  
 to God manifested in the life, and no relation  
 to God, but that which arises from creation,  
 without the least benefit from redemption.—  
 For to be "in the flesh," in the sense of the  
 Apostle, in this place, is to be without proper  
 faith in Christ, and therefore without God in  
 the world. For the Apostle expressly declares,

\* John i. 12. † Gal. iv. 5, 6. ‡ Rom. viii. 6. § Ver. 8.

that

that “ if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, “ he is none of his\*.” But—mark the distinction—in the fourteenth verse, he tells us, that “ as many as are led by the Spirit of “ God, they are the Sons of God.” And by a natural, just, and undeniable conclusion, “ they that are *not* led by the Spirit of God, “ are *not* the Sons of God,” in a spiritual and saving sense ; and, consequently, in a spiritual and saving sense, God is not their Father.

But that something more than mere creation is necessary to God’s being our Father, in a sense comfortable and soothing to our souls, is clear from Corinthians, where we find these words : “ Come out from among them, and “ be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not “ the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, “ and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall “ be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord “ Almighty†.”

Again. The perverse and unbelieving Jews, in their dispute with our Lord, said to him, “ We have one Father, even God.” Jesus

\* Rom. viii. 9.

† 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

imme-

immediately answered them in these ever memorable words : “ If God were your Father, “ ye would love me : for I proceeded forth, “ and came from God.” “ He that is of God,” said the meek and holy Jesus, “ heareth God’s “ words : ye therefore hear them not, because “ ye are not of God.” “ Ye are of your father, “ the devil, and the lusts of your father ye “ will do\*.”

I have dwelt the longer, and been the more particular, on this part of our subject, in order that the distinctions, which are made in Scripture upon this important point, and which are of consequence for us to know, might be clearly stated to our view, and deeply impressed upon our minds. And I hope it will ever be remembered by the dear people before me, that if God is our Father only, as he is our Creator and Preserver, we have nothing higher or better to expect from him, than the blessings of earth : but if by faith in the Mediator we love and obey the pure Gospel of God, and he become our God and Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, then

\* John viii.

may we expect, after we have done with all the blessings of earth, a future Heaven of Eternal Rest and Glory. But let the thought dwell upon our hearts, that we cannot be the Disciples of Christ, nor accepted of God, unless we are obedient. This, therefore, leads me to consider,

III. What God hath a right to require, and what he really doth require, of us, in consequence of the august character of Father.— And first, as a Father, there is due to him Profound Reverence, from us, his Children. I say, from us, “his Children;” for we are all his children by Creation, though, perhaps, many among us are so unhappy as not to be his children by Redemption; but, as the Apostle Paul expresses it to the Colossians— “Enemies in our mind by wicked works.”

God, as our Father, is entitled to the reverence of our hearts, of our thoughts, of our affections, of our imaginations, of our words, of our actions, and of our whole deportment. When we utter the holy and tremendous name of God, it should be with  
reverence



reverence and awe.—It is reported of the pious Boyle, who was a man of wealth and wisdom, and allowed to be one of the greatest philosophers of the age in which he lived—of this great man it is reported, that before he would venture to utter the name of God, he would make a solemn pause. How unlike to the irreverent and ungodly manners of the present day ! A day of extreme iniquity, in which the holy name of God is blasphemed by almost all descriptions of people\*.

I conclude this article in the words of St. Paul—“ Let us have grace, whereby we may  
“ serve God acceptably, with reverence and  
“ godly fear. For our God is a consuming  
“ fire†.”

As our Father, God is also entitled to Honour and Obedience from us. Unless we obey him, we cannot honour him: and unless we honour him, we shall not be owned of him. Honour is an indispensable duty in children to their parents. And if it be a duty

\* See, on this subject, Lecture III.

† Heb. xii. 28.

which

which an earthly parent has a natural right to require from a child, how much more has our heavenly Father a right to demand it of all his children ? Let us then be intent upon honouring the Lord with our whole souls, and desire to serve him, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the remaining days of our life. “ A son honoureth his father, and a  
 “ servant his master : if then I be a Father,  
 “ where is mine honour ? and if I be a Master,  
 “ where is my fear ? saith the Lord of hosts  
 “ unto you\*.”

As a Father, God is likewise entitled to our Gratitude, for his manifold favours bestowed upon us. It becomes us to thank him for Life and all its Blessings. For our Health, Ease, Food, Raiment, Friends, Liberty, and Reason. And above all, those who are the spiritual children of God, will thank him principally for Jesus Christ, and for the Bible, and Sabbaths, and Ministers, and for all the degrees of Grace they have received here, and for the hope of Glory hereafter.

\* Mal. i. 6.

Again.

Again. God, as our infinitely wise and good Father, is entitled to our cheerful acquiescence in all his dispensations ; the most trying as well as the most flattering—the most painful as well as the most pleasant. “ No chastening for  
 “ the present seemeth joyous, but grievous :  
 “ nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peace-  
 “ able fruit of righteousness, unto them which  
 “ are” properly “ exercised thereby.” And, as  
 “ we have had fathers of our flesh, which  
 “ corrected us, and we gave them reverence ;  
 “ shall we not much rather be in subjection  
 “ unto the Father of Spirits, and live ?”—  
 “ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the  
 “ mighty hand of God, that he may exalt  
 “ you in due time.”

In order to all this, there must be Love to our Father which is in heaven. Love is naturally due to parents, and that child is accounted a Monster in nature, who loveth not his Father or his Mother. What then can we think of a man, who calls God his Father, and yet loves him not ? All mankind would flatter themselves that they love God, as all are ready to allow it is their duty ; but be it  
 known

known unto you, men and brethren, that he who does not make it the grand business of life to serve and honour God, that man has not the love of God dwelling in him. And of all monsters, he is the most monstrous, who denies his love to the God of Love and Father of Mercies. Our heavenly Father is not only entitled to the love of each of our hearts, but he requires it also in the clearest manner and strongest terms. Thus runs the divine command : “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God  
 “ with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and  
 “ with all thy mind, and with all thy strength :  
 “ this is the first commandment\*.”

Having mentioned a few of the many things which God our Father has a right to expect from *us*, I proceed now to consider briefly, in the last place, what his obedient children may humbly expect from *him*. And I begin with what most men desire—and that is Honour. These are the words of the Lord : “ Them  
 “ that honour me, I will honour : and they  
 “ that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed†.” The Lord does not here promise that his ser-

\* Mark xii. 30.

† 1 Sam. ii. 30.



vants shall be thought honourably of by the wicked world, and be sincerely loved by the unholy and profane. But he himself will honour them. He will honour them with his Favour, with his Presence, and with his Image—with true likeness unto himself, which consists “in Righteousness and true Holiness.” And it may please God to honour his servants in a way in which few or none would like to be honoured, but those who would be satisfied with “the honour that cometh from God only;” and that is in a way of Suffering and Reproach. This was the honour he put upon some of his holy Apostles; who, after very severe trials and distresses, declared, they rejoiced that they were “accounted worthy “to suffer for the name of Christ.” But however or by whatever means the Lord honours his people here, he will certainly honour them before men and angels hereafter.

God’s obedient children may also humbly expect, from their heavenly Father, Compassion and Protection. Like as an earthly Father pitieth a Son that serveth him, “so the Lord “pitieth them that fear him.” His compassions

passions and loving-kindnesses never fail them that love and trust him. In all their afflictions he is, as it were, afflicted with them, and he is a very present help in all their troubles. His eye runs to and fro through the earth, to behold them whose hearts are upright with him, that he may save and defend them from evil. He knoweth their souls in adversity and in danger, and lest any hurt them he will watch over them night and day, and surround and keep them every moment. For “the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and “his countenance doth behold the upright.”

Further. God's faithful children may humbly expect, from their heavenly Father, that portion of temporal good things, which his unerring wisdom knows to be best for them, upon the whole. He that “covereth the “heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for “the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon “the mountains, who giveth to the beast his “food, and to the young ravens which cry;” will not suffer his children that love him, his dear people that serve him, to want any thing which perfect wisdom and perfect goodness,

ness, inconceivable mercy and unbounded kindness, combined in the same views, and acting in the most perfect harmony, know to be for their truest and most lasting welfare.

But not to rest on bare assertions, which might leave the anxious mind in doubt, our blessed Lord hath left us a solemn promise on this subject, to which we shall do well to take heed. This promise is recorded, and runs in these engaging words: “ Seek ye first the  
“ kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and  
“ all these things shall be added unto you\*.”

The time would fail me to enumerate all the particular mercies and favours, which the faithful children of God may humbly and comfortably expect from their Father which is in Heaven. And therefore in the last place I remark to you, in general, that every thing, which would tend to promote their eternal felicity, the Disciples of Jesus are taught to expect from *him* whose love is equal to his power, and whose power is more than equal to all our wants or wishes. Let me prove

\* Matt. vi. 23.

this from Scripture, and I hope it will suffice you. In the eighty-fourth Psalm, eleventh verse, we have these sweet and cheering expressions—expressions which should brighten the countenance and relieve the burdened bosom of every child of God, by faith in Jesus—“ The Lord God is a Sun and Shield,  
 “ the Lord will give grace and glory: no good  
 “ thing will he with-hold from them that  
 “ walk uprightly.”

From our subject we learn, First, that those, who do not so believe in Jesus Christ as to obey his Gospel, have God for their Father in a very inferior sense from true Christians, and cannot expect to be owned of him at Death and in Judgment. But, perhaps, it will be asked by some—Can it be supposed that God will destroy, or punish for ever, his creatures whom he hath made? To this I shall give no answer of my own, but reply in the words of Scripture. Thus it is declared: “ He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life: but  
 “ the wrath of God abideth on him\*.” How

\* John iii. 36.



solemnly still it is declared, that “ the Lord  
 “ Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in  
 “ flaming fire, taking vengeance on them  
 “ that know not God, and that obey not the  
 “ Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall  
 “ be punished with everlasting destruction,  
 “ from the presence of the Lord, and from  
 “ the glory of his power\*.”

Secondly, The true Disciples of Jesus Christ are the Sons of God in a peculiar sense, and are, by that relation, through the grace of God, entitled to the most distinguished blessings.— How should this make us all desire to become believing and obedient children! Who would not, in this high and noble sense, have God for their Father? “ Behold !” says the Apostle John, “ Behold ! what manner of love the  
 “ Father hath bestowed upon us, that we  
 “ should be called the Sons of God : therefore  
 “ the world knoweth,” or acknowledgeth,  
 “ us not, because it knew,” or acknowledged,  
 “ him not†.” O that we may be the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty, owned

\* 2 Theff. i.

† 1 John iii. 1.

and blessed by him as such, through Jesus Christ, though the world should disown, or even hate and despise us !

Thirdly, Let true Christians be more and more thankful for Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to prepare for them an eternal crown. Often, my dear hearers, often let your gratitude vent itself in these words : “ Thanks be to “ God for his unspeakable gift.”

Lastly, Let sinners be prevailed on to cry to God for a believing, penitent, and obedient heart—that they may have God for their Father indeed—that they may be delivered from the curse of sin in this world, and be crowned with endless favour in the next, through that Jesus, whom they now in vain call their Saviour.

## LECTURE II.

MATTHEW vi. 9.

WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

**I**N the Lord's Prayer, being first instructed to call God "Our Father," we are next to consider him as dwelling in the Heavens, "in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting." *Amen.*

In discoursing from the words now read, I shall attempt to shew,

I. What we are to understand by God's being in heaven.

II. What sentiments this truth ought to inspire us with—especially in our prayers. And then conclude with a particular application of the subject.

I. I

I. I shall attempt to shew what we are to understand by these words, “ Which art in “ Heaven,” as applied to God, our heavenly Father. “ After this manner therefore pray “ ye,” said Christ to his Disciples, “ Our “ Father which art in Heaven.”

And I apprehend, the expression denotes the infinite Dignity, Eminence, Glory, Majesty, Power, and Perfections of the blessed God.— It intimates his unutterable and inconceivable superiority over all the work of his hands and the creatures of his power, even the greatest and most glorious of them. “ The heavens “ declare the glory of God, and the firmament “ sheweth his handy work,” in a measure; but God hath set his “ glory above the heavens;” and as it is too great for mortal eye to behold, so does it exceed the powers of mortal tongue to describe.

Also by the expression in the text, in union and harmony with various other passages of Scripture, we are to understand, that there is a place, or state, called Heaven, where the great God of the Universe, in condescension  
to



to mortal language and human infirmity, is said to keep his throne, and to reign as the King of the whole earth, and as the supreme Monarch of all Worlds. This is the exulting voice of the sacred Scriptures: "The Lord is King for ever." "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." "The Lord is the true God, an everlasting King." "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty and strength. He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad." "The Lord's throne is in Heaven, and justice and judgment are the habitation of that throne."

Thus, as "the Lord's throne is in Heaven," in that blessed and blissful world, his glories and goodnesses, his mercies and bounties, are more eminently, more illustriously, more transcendently displayed, than in any other part of his vast and extensive empire. Heaven is that august temple, in which the King of Saints unveils his glory, and receives the pure and pleasing homage of all the happy orders which  
the

the hands of Grace and Love have planted there. There he renders completely blessed surrounding, admiring, and adoring angels; and there he fills "with joy unspeakable the spirits of just men made perfect." There they

———— "see his face,  
 " And never, never sin,  
 " And from the rivers of his grace  
 " Drink endless pleasures in."

For in the presence of this King, the Lord of hosts, "there is a fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore."

But God, our Father, is not *so* in Heaven as to be absent from the earth. Neither his Goodness, his Knowledge, nor his Presence, is confined to the skies. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool\*." This passage is beautifully expressive of God's intimate acquaintance with, and continual presence in, both worlds. "The Heaven is his Throne." There, and there alone, can be seen the solemn Grandeur of his Holy Court. But, "the earth is still his footstool." Here he stands the unerring spectator of all human actions,

\* Isa. lxvi. 1.

and

and the infallible searcher of all human hearts. And it deserves our notice, that when we are told, that “the Lord’s throne is in Heaven,” it is immediately added, “his eyes behold, his eye-lids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous ; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his foul hateth\*.”

But that I may give you the clearest ideas of the universality of the Divine Presence, and of his perfect acquaintance with our persons and proceedings, I will quote to you the striking and interesting words of David, with which I shall conclude this article.

“O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassedst my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo ! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon

\* Psal. xi. 5.

“ me. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or  
 “ whither shall I flee from thy presence? If  
 “ I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if  
 “ I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art  
 “ there. If I take the wings of the morning,  
 “ and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea :  
 “ even there shall thy hand lead me, and  
 “ thy right-hand shall hold me. If I say,  
 “ Surely the darkness shall cover me, even  
 “ the night shall be light about me. Yea,  
 “ the darkness hideth not from thee; but  
 “ the night shineth as the day : the darkness  
 “ and the light are both alike to Thee\*.”—  
 This needs no comment. And therefore I pass  
 from this to the

Second thing proposed ; which is to shew  
 what sentiments this truth ought to inspire us  
 with, that God, our Creator, dwelleth in the  
 Heavens—and more particularly, with what  
 views and dispositions we ought to approach  
 God in prayer.

In general, we ought to conceive highly and  
 honourably of God. Every low, degrading

\* Psal. cxxxix.

and



and injurious thought should immediately be expelled from our bosoms. "God is a Spirit," and therefore every image of him, formed by a vain fancy and ignorant mind, should, with pious indignation, be thrust from the heart, and never more be suffered to enter there.—Our Father is in Heaven, and therefore his children should abhor every earthly and sensual idea, which offers to attach itself to their apprehensions of Him.

But more particularly, in our addresses to "our Father which is in Heaven," we ought, First, to be exceedingly reverent. Upon this point the following words of Sir Matthew Hale, Judge, deserve our attention: "Let thy prayer be full of Reverence: for, as thou comest to a Father, and in that relation thou owest him reverence; so thou comest to a Heavenly Father, the great Lord and Judge of all things. And as a Father, and such a Father, calls for thy reverence, so especially when thou considerest that thou comest to this great King in his throne, in the place of his Majesty and Glory. And therefore this expression—of God's being in Heaven—is  
" added,

“ added, to take up the whole latitude of thy  
 “ thoughts, with the highest apprehensions of  
 “ the Glory and Majesty of the Lord, before  
 “ whom thou comest, and that thou mayest  
 “ consider the infinite distance that is between  
 “ thee and the Lord of Heaven. “ For as the  
 “ Heaven is higher than the Earth, so are my  
 “ thoughts than your thoughts, and my ways  
 “ than your ways, saith the Lord.”

Men ought to approach their Father which is in Heaven, with great care and attention of mind, carefully remembering, and seriously considering, the Greatness and the Purity of that Being with whom they have to do.— Their souls ought to be composed into a holy, solemn frame, and be calmly intent upon the great and important business in which they profess to engage.

The shameful carelessness of some pretended worshippers of our Heavenly Father, is censured by the pious Bishop Babington, in the following plain, but honest language: “ We  
 “ clap ourselves down to pray, and we think  
 “ of any thing, rather than the mighty Majesty  
 “ of

“ of Him before whom we are come ; and  
 “ therefore we gaze here, and gaze there.—  
 “ We note this man, and that woman ; their  
 “ gesture, their apparel ; yea, the least toy,  
 “ especially that is strange about them ; and we  
 “ pray (or think we pray) well. We huddle up  
 “ in haste the labour of our lips, without touch  
 “ of heart, and the sooner, the better. We  
 “ long to have done, for fear dinner be marr’d  
 “ (or spoiled) and yet we pray (or think we  
 “ pray) well. We gape, we hem, we yawn,  
 “ not for necessity of nature, but in the drow-  
 “ siness of the spirits, and yet we think we  
 “ pray well.”

Though some of these expressions may have  
 an uncouth sound in a modern ear, yet in the  
 pious writer’s day, perhaps they needed no  
 apology. The things, however, that are here  
 condemned, are often repeated in Christian  
 Assemblies, and are so common, as to have  
 fallen under the notice, I suppose, of most  
 here present ; and it is well if some of us have  
 not been guilty of them, though they are,  
 beyond all doubt, a disgrace to creatures who  
 profess to worship the God of Heaven.

It

It is too clear an evidence that they do not consider him, as “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders” of mercy in their favour : and, that they do not remember, that “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.”

Further. When we come before God in prayer, the consideration of his being in Heaven should engage us to present to him a heavenly mind. We should endeavour to leave all the distracting cares of this life behind us, that we may worship God in the very best manner. It is unseemly and improper to utter words with our lips before God, with the world in our hearts.

We are, indeed, allowed to mention our worldly affairs before our heavenly Father, and to make them a part of our prayers, for we are instructed to ask for “daily bread.” But this is an indulgence and a favour, which we must be careful not to turn into sin. This shews our dependence upon God, and implies our

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looking



looking to him for temporal prosperity, or at least for his blessing upon our honest endeavours, according to our respective situations in life. But this will not excuse us in bringing to a throne of grace a heart, fet upon, and filled with, the cares, the businessses, the profits, the disappointments, or the pleasures, of the world.

No. Our Father is in Heaven, and we must not appear before him with our hearts loaded, and our minds clogged, with earth. For then how shall we say, with the devout Psalmist, “Unto thee, Lord, I lift up my  
“foul?”

Our souls ought to be raised, upon such occasions, above the present state, unto God in the Heavens—for our business is with him. And whenever we are at the footstool of Divine Mercy, we might well address our Consciences thus—What do we here, unless it be to converse with the great Father of our Spirits? And he must be conversed with otherwise than by the bended knee, and the up-lifted hand and eye: he is “a Spirit, and  
“must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.”

Again.

Again. In our intercourses with God in the duties which he hath graciously appointed, we should be all zeal and earnestness. We ought to bring with us hearts glowing with love, and the flame of Devotion should spread itself through all the powers of the soul, and diffuse a heavenly warmth over all the mind. It should impart an animation to our petitions, and put a divine energy into our solemn thanksgivings. We should do well frequently to recollect, that it is the “ effectual fervent prayer “ of a righteous man that availeth much.”

In an especial manner it becomes men to approach their Father which is in Heaven, with souls filled with holy desires and designs. God is infinitely holy, and holiness becometh his house and his people for ever. We dare not, therefore, allow the least impurity of thought, of word, or of deed. If any one sin hath dominion over us, or if any one beloved lust is secretly cherished in our bosoms, our Father which is in Heaven, in the heights of purity and glory, will disdain our services, and frown on our base pretensions. In his ear, our tongues when uttering the warmest expressions

of duty and gratitude, will be but as sounding  
brats, making a deceitful and unpleasant noise.  
In his eye, our persons will be as “whited  
“sepulchres, which outwardly may appear  
“beautiful, but inwardly are full of all un-  
“cleanness.” In his account, our devotions  
will be replete with sin, and greatly aggravate  
our condemnation; and instead of procuring  
us the smallest blessing, will draw after them  
a long train of woes and curses. “He that  
“turneth away his ear from hearing the law,”  
says Solomon, that is, he that is disobedient to  
the divine command, “even his prayer shall  
“be abomination\*.” We find the same sen-  
timent expressed in these words—“The  
“sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to  
“the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is  
“his delight. The way of the wicked is an  
“abomination to the Lord: but he loveth  
“him that followeth after righteousness†.”  
The same solemn truth is expressed by the  
holy Psalmist thus—“If I regard iniquity in  
“my heart, the Lord will not hear me‡.”

\* Prov. xxviii. 9.  
lxvi. 18.

† Prov. xv. 8, 9.

‡ Psal.

As though he had said, ‘ However careful  
 ‘ I am to conceal my sin from the eye of  
 ‘ man, and however fair my character may  
 ‘ be in the eye of the world, yet if I regard,  
 ‘ or encourage, any secret iniquity, though it  
 ‘ be in the depths of my heart, the Lord  
 ‘ will find it out, and punish it accordingly.  
 ‘ It will be a worm at the root of all my  
 ‘ happiness, and be a fire in my bosom, which  
 ‘ will destroy my soul; for that God who  
 ‘ cannot behold iniquity, without abhorrence,  
 ‘ and who is angry with the wicked every  
 ‘ day, will blast the fruit of all my doings,  
 ‘ send cursing instead of blessing, and hold my  
 ‘ very prayers in a righteous detestation.’—

This reasoning well becomes every soul of  
 man that addresses itself to the adorable  
 Majesty of Heaven and Earth, whose nature  
 is purity, whose habitation is the seat of  
 sanctity; and whose commands are ever-  
 lastingly holy—a God that cannot be deceived  
 —a Judge that will not be mocked.

From the consideration that our Father is  
 in Heaven, we should also approach him with  
 profound humility and religious caution, re-



membering the awful distance there is between him and us. Excellent to this purpose is the advice of Solomon, drawn from the consideration mentioned in our text—"Keep thy foot," says he, "when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon the Earth; therefore let thy words be few\*."

In the sublime language of scripture, "he hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Behold, in his sight, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. All nations before him are as nothing, and

\* Eccles. v.

" they

“ they are counted to him less than nothing,  
“ and vanity.”

Hence we learn the propriety of David’s address to the Lord, in the following words.  
“ O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name  
“ in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above  
“ the heavens! When I consider thy heavens,  
“ the work of thy fingers, the moon and the  
“ stars which thou hast ordained; What is man,  
“ that thou art mindful of him? and the son of  
“ man, that thou visitest him\*?”

These sentiments ought we to adopt, when we pray to our Father which is in Heaven; for he is high above all that our ears have heard, and above all that our hearts can conceive. “ Who is like unto the Lord  
“ our God who dwelleth on high, and  
“ humbleth himself even to behold the things  
“ that are in Heaven.”

Further. Men ought to approach the throne of grace with great thankfulness of heart, for the wonderful condescension of their

\* Psalm viii.

exalted God and Father. If God is in Heaven and we are on the earth, how great is his kindness, and how engaging is his love, in admitting us to the so much and so justly desired privilege of prayer ! If he stooped to receive the homage and attend to the happiness of angels, yet, what claim have men to such inestimable favours ? It is true, we call God, *Father*, but we have been rebellious children, and forfeited the title of sons, and are no more worthy to be called by that honourable name. The Angels in Heaven are holy, but we are sinful. An evil heart of unbelief hath led us astray, in causing us to depart from the living God ; and from the character of sons we have departed to that of enemies, for we have been, in the words of the apostle Paul, “ alienated, and enemies in “ our mind by wicked works\*.”

But this leads to another consideration, and discovers another, and may I not say, a higher, reason for gratitude to our Father which is in Heaven ? This leads us up to the astonishing mercy of Redemption, without which none

\* Coloss. i. 21.

of us should ever reach the Heaven, where our Father reigns in glory. “For all have sinned, “and come short of the glory of God.” None can plead his innocence, his righteousness, his goodness, or his worthiness, before the Most High, and claim heaven and happiness at his hands. On the contrary, “every “mouth must be stopped, for all the world is “become guilty before God. Therefore by “the deeds of the law,” or, by the obedience which we have or can perform, “there shall no “flesh be justified in his sight\*.”

It is only by Jesus Christ that we can have access to our Father which is in Heaven. When we come to him, it must be in the name of Jesus. He hath “opened a new and “a living way†” for poor sinners, through his own flesh, and spilt his precious blood to save their souls, and without shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sin. But now, by the power of a lively Faith, and a sincere Repentance, a thorough Reformation of Life, and a true Love to God, a perfect Hatred of Iniquity, and an earnest Desire after Holiness,

\* Gal. iii. passim.

† Heb. x. 20.

trembling



trembling finners of Adam's race, rebellious subjects and disobedient children, may safely and comfortably approach their Father which is in Heaven. O! the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ! O! the strong, the almost irresistible motive to Repentance and newness of life! O! the amazing, the astonishing, the almost incredible, argument for love to God and Goodness! Behold! how "God commandeth his love towards us, in that while "we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!" How inexcusable must be the man or the woman, that after this shall presume to live in sin! How overwhelming will be the condemnation of them, who will venture to make such an ill return for the surprizing kindness of the God of Mercy! It were better for them that a millstone were hanged about their neck, and they drowned in the depths of the sea, than that they should act such a base and unworthy part: yea, it would have been far better, had they never been born.

One remark more I shall make upon our subject, as it particularly respects the duty of prayer; and that is, that as our Father is in  
Heaven,

Heaven, we may pray to him as well in one place as in another. His Presence, his Blessings, are not confined to any particular Church, Chapel or Meeting-house ; but all that call upon him in sincerity and truth, in the name of Jesus, in any part of the earth, will be graciously accepted of him. Our Father is in Heaven, to see, to hear, and to dispense his favours among, all that in every place call on the Lord Jesus out of a pure heart ; on that Jesus who is set forth in the Gospel as the hope of the believing penitent. And all that believe in him, and obey his Gospel, will be saved ; and they that do not, where his Gospel is preached, we are taught from that Gospel to conclude, that they will as certainly be damned. “ How shall we “ escape, if we neglect so great salvation\*?”

The improvement I intend to make of this subject, is to exhort true Christians to confidence in their Father which is in Heaven, and to reflect on the happiness of being his children.

First. Confidence in God is the Duty and the Privilege of Christ's faithful Disciples.

\* John iii. 36. Mark xvi. 16.

Your

Your Father, Christians, is in Heaven, and he ruleth over all. All worlds stand in awe of him, and tremble at the least intimation of his displeasure. “The earth shaketh, and the heavens drop at his presence. A devouring fire goeth before his face, and a mighty tempest is stirred up round about him. His chariots are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. He ruleth the raging of the sea, and stilleth the waves thereof when they arise.” It is this glorious God that maketh the thunder.—Heaven is his, the Earth is his, and Hell is his. And if this mighty, mighty God is your Father, Christians (were he your enemy indeed, you were everlastingly undone) but if he is your Father through Christ, what have you to fear, either from Men or Devils? Surely nothing.—He will guard you from all evil, and bring you to his heavenly kingdom. How happy then,

Secondly, to have Him for our Father ! It is thought an Honour and a Pleasure to have an earthly Father ; and many weeping eyes and aching hearts have been occasioned by the  
loss

loss of such. But O ! the infinite happiness of having God for our Father—the Almighty and Everlasting God ! How is my soul moved with the thought ! How are all my powers charmed, even to ravishment, with the transporting idea ! To have God for my reconciled Father, through Jesus, my heart can wish no more. My desires are completely satisfied. My God, to me, is All. I can pursue the subject no further, but only wish that all my dear hearers may have God for their Father in Christ. *Amen.*



# LECTURE III.

MATTHEW vi. 9.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

**I**N the Lord's Prayer, the first express petition we are taught to make, is, that God's Name may be *hallowed*, or sanctified. From which we may infer, that the honour of God is to be the first object of our attention and desires.

In discoursing from the words I shall endeavour to shew,

- I. What is meant by God's *Name*.
- II. What it is to *hallow*, or sanctify it.
- III. By what means it is *dishonoured*.
- IV. Why it ought to be hallowed by all men.

And may the Lord mercifully add his blessing to the whole, and make it profitable to our souls, through Jesus Christ. *Amen*.

I. I am

I. I am to shew, very briefly, what we are to understand by God's *name*, which we are instructed to pray may be hallowed. And 'we are to understand God's name here,' says Dr. John Edwards, 'in the most strict and 'and proper sense, as *name* signifies that by 'which we call any thing or person. God's 'name in the old and new Testament signifies 'God himself. As in Pf. xx. 1. "The name "of the God of Jacob defend thee." The 'Properties and Attributes of God are also 'meant by his name. By the name of God 'we may likewise understand his works of 'Creation and Providence. Also by God's '*name* we are to understand not merely the 'names and titles given to him, and God 'himself, his Attributes, and Works—but, 'moreover, his Word, his Will, his Laws, 'yea, and the Whole of Religion.'

'Thus our blessed Lord declares to his 'heavenly Father—"I have manifested thy "name unto them whom thou gavest me." 'That is, I have declared thy Will and Com- 'mandments. Again, St. Paul was a chosen 'vessel to God, to bear his name before the 'Gentiles.'

‘Gentiles. That is, to preach his holy word  
 ‘unto them.—So in 2 Tim. ii. 19. where the  
 ‘Apostle exhorts to holiness in these words—  
 “Let every one that nameth the name of  
 “Christ, depart from iniquity.” By naming  
 ‘the name of Christ is meant, making a  
 ‘Profession of the Christian Religion—the  
 ‘owning of the doctrine and institution of our  
 ‘blessed Saviour.’

‘And so by holding fast God’s Name, in  
 ‘Rev. ii. 13. is meant, an adherence to God’s  
 ‘word and truth: and to deny God’s Name,  
 ‘in the third chapter, is to apostatize from the  
 ‘profession and practice of the truth.’

Judging this sufficient to give a general idea  
 of what is meant by God’s name, I proceed to  
 shew,

II. What it is to *hallow*, or sanctify, that  
 blessed name.

And then we hallow the Divine Name,  
 when we think highly and reverently of it in  
 our hearts. As it is with the heart, so it is  
 with

with the man. If that is right, all is right : if that be wrong all is wrong. If a man doth not hallow the holy name of God in his heart, he will not hallow it in lip and life : he will not even in lip, unless he add outward hypocrisy to inward irreverence, which would be the way to make him more abominable to him who always looketh at the heart, and will accept of no service in which that is not engaged.

To hallow the *name* of God, therefore, is to mingle the profoundest reverence with all our thoughts of God. Inwardly to admire his wonderful perfections. From the inmost soul to adore him for his greatness, glory, goodness, wisdom, mercy, justice, truth, love, and works. It is to honour him with all the sentiments of our minds. To place ourselves as under his eye, and pay a sacred regard to his will, in all our wishes and desires, in all our views and contemplations, and in all our schemes and intentions. Thus should the heart be affected, and that would not fail to influence the tongue. I therefore remark,

E

That



That to hallow the name of God, is also to *mention* it, at all times, with great seriousness and awe. The tremendous name of God is on no account, on no occasion, to be trifled with. To hallow is to sanctify; and to sanctify is to set things apart for holy purposes.

We can add nothing to the sanctity of the divine name. That is holy in the most perfect degree, and far beyond what our mortal powers will help us to conceive. It is evident, therefore, that when we are required to hallow, or sanctify, that holy name, the meaning is, that we are to use it as it is. We are to use it holily, religiously, and in the most careful manner. If we use it in any other way, we treat it as what it is not; that is, as a common, or un sanctified thing. And this is to pollute and defile it, and to do what we can to render it common, or unholy; by which wicked conduct God is dishonoured.

But if, on the contrary, we utter the name of the infinite Majesty, with evident marks\* of inward veneration, respect and seriousness,

\* See Lecture I. page 14.

then

then do we hallow it, and as “ out of the  
 “ abundance of the heart, the mouth speak-  
 “ eth,” nothing can be more plain, than that  
 it is the first duty of every man that would  
 please God, to endeavour to get his heart most  
 solemnly impressed with the incomprehensible  
 greatness and glory of his mighty and adorable  
 Creator; and upon his memory should be  
 engraven, if I may so say, this idea, that the  
 powerful God whom he is to fear, love, and  
 honour, is forever present with him; present  
 to hear his words, behold his thoughts, see  
 his actions and mark his dispositions.

Moreover, To hallow our heavenly Father’s  
 name, is to worship him aright; and that is,  
 to offer him a truly spiritual worship. “ God  
 “ is a spirit, and they that worship him  
 “ acceptably, must worship him in spirit and  
 “ in truth; and the Father seeketh such to  
 “ worship him.”

What can we think of creatures, who  
 venture into the more immediate presence of  
 the great God, come near his footstool, bow  
 before his throne, presume to call him Father,

and even say, they wish his name to be *hallowed*; when their hearts are unconcerned, their spirits unmoved, their thoughts employed upon their worldly business, or pleasures, or something that is entirely foreign to the solemn business in which they profess to be engaged! Their souls cold and carnal! Their consciences hard and insensible! Themselves almost ignorant of what they utter! How is God's name hallowed by such? Rather, how dreadfully is it dishonoured?

Of such worshippers the Almighty complains thus—"The Lord said, forasmuch  
 "as this people draw near me with their  
 "mouth, and with their lips do honour me,  
 "but have removed their heart far from me,  
 "therefore behold, I will proceed to do a  
 "marvellous work against this people\*." Again we have the same complaint expressed in the following words—"They sit before  
 "thee," that is before the prophet, "as my  
 "people; and they hear thy words; but they  
 "will not do them: for with their mouth  
 "they shew much love, but their heart goeth

\* Isai. xxix. 13.

"after

“after their covetousness\*.” Wo to all such worshippers.

On the other hand, those who approach the Lord in sincerity, and worship him in truth, they hallow his holy name. They are accepted through Jesus Christ, in whose name, and with an eye to whose death and atonement, all our religious duties must be performed. But all who worship God aright, seriously intend that their practical religion shall outlive their occasional devotions, and therefore I remark

That to be obedient to God's known will, is to hallow his name. To flatter ourselves with the idea of a safe religion, without practice, is a delusion; and to talk of the divine will, without endeavouring to perform it, is to insult our Maker, and to ruin our own souls. To profess to believe in God, and in works deny him, has in it something monstrous beyond expression, and the softest name it deserves, is that of practical atheism. In vain do men say, *hallowed be thy name*, if that

\* Ezek. xxxiii. 31.



name is not hallowed and honoured by their *actions*. Fair speeches may please while they impose upon a man like ourselves, but God cannot be deceived, neither will he be mocked. Our words will be an abomination in his ear, if our hearts do not accompany them, and if our lives contradict them.

God's name would be easily hallowed, if it could be done merely by opening our lips, and uttering a few unmeaning expressions. But as this is a something—I will not say a service—ininitely unworthy the God of Heaven, so that religion which leads not its votaries to a holy life, is not from Heaven, nor will it ever conduct to Heaven.

The man that would hallow God's holy name, must not do it in words merely, but by substantial deeds of righteousness: by endeavouring “to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless:” by remembering, and complying with, this sacred rule of the Apostle, “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God\*.”

\* 1 Cor. x. 31.

We cannot, by any interpretation, be looked upon as the friends of God, if we disregard and disobey his will. Accordingly, our blessed Redeemer said to his followers, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you\*.” Nothing is more easy than for a man to *call* himself a Christian. No performance more slender, than to say, *hallowed be thy name*; and yet, perhaps, there are few things more common than for men to denominate themselves from thence, good kind of people: or if not from thence merely, yet from circumstances equally feeble and ineffectual. If a man of this description utters a few expressions of prayer and praise every day before God, he presently concludes that he is a good man; otherwise he thinks he should not thus far oblige his Maker. All such persons would do well to consider the solemn declarations of Christ, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven: but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in Heaven†.” So, not every one that saith, *hallowed be thy name*, doth really

\* John xv. 14.

† Matt. vii. 21.

hallow, sanctify, or honour God's name ; but he that doeth the will of God from the heart, and so lets his light shine before men, that they, by seeing his good works, may also be led to glorify their Father which is in Heaven. "*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*"

But as men hallow the divine name, by doing the divine will, in general, so do they more particularly, by being stedfast and immoveable in the works, ways, and service of God, when the generality of mankind either avowedly despise, or indolently neglect, true religion. The Lord always looks upon himself as most honoured by *those* who willingly bear the greatest reproach, and cheerfully endure the greatest sufferings, for his name's sake. Were others cold, and we warm in religion ; did others reject, and we embrace godliness ; did others persecute, and we endure ; were others filled with displeasure, and were we meek, patient, and forbearing ; and returned good for evil, blessing for cursing, and all this from the purest and best of motives ; all for the honour of God's name  
and

and cause, and with a view to the conversion and happiness of mankind; in this case, no doubt could be made, but that *we* had more of the love of God and man upon our hearts, than those who acted the *contrary* part; and there is as little reason to doubt, that the Almighty would be pleased to account himself more honoured by them who thus practised the holy virtues of his Gospel, than by those who in their lives disgraced that heavenly religion, and by their manners stabbed it to the heart.

They therefore most effectually hallow God's name, who hold it fast, when others let it go: who honour it by their words and works, without fear or shame, at a time when vice and immorality prevail and reign; when young and old are wicked in their hearts and dissolute in their practices, and when the pure doctrines and self-denying precepts of the holy religion of Jesus, serve only as a subject of ridicule, or as matter of scorn.

Having shewn, in some imperfect degree, what it is to hallow the Lord's name, I proceed now,

### III. To



III. To shew what it is to dishonour it. The nature of the former head required that this should, in some measure, be anticipated. Nothing, however, has been yet said, which properly belongs to this part, but may be enlarged; and there are several other things which remain yet unnamed.

I begin with observing, that they offend against our text, who allow themselves to think lightly and irreverently of the great God in their minds. Who allow themselves to think of him without feeling, or desiring to feel, a suitable awe and solemnity upon their spirits. And especially they who can satisfy themselves in this article, by saying to their hearts, 'It is a secret to my friends, my neighbours and my companions. It is safe, for no mortal eye perceives the workings of my breast, or knoweth the thoughts I cherish there.' But doth not God know?

Again. They openly and most flagrantly sin against the text, who are guilty of profane swearing. Who utter oaths as though they were common words, and words of no consequence.

quence.—Horrid custom ! and yet how dreadfully does it prevail ! To be ignorant of it, we must shut our ears ; for the lanes, and streets, and almost all other places of public concourse, are full of this sin. We often find it in old and young, in masters and servants, in parents and children. If ever it were true of Britain, that for “ swearing the land mourneth,” I believe it is now. This is a sin which certainly crieth aloud to heaven for vengeance : and who shall presume to say, that vengeance of the heaviest and surest nature will be long delayed ?

In excuse for the sin of profane swearing, it is in vain for some to plead, that ‘ they do it ‘ through carelessness ;’ that ‘ they don’t know ‘ many times what they say.’ They ought to be careful of their words, and always to know what they are about to say before they speak, for they are rational creatures, and God will call them into judgment for their words as certainly as for their actions. “ I say unto “ you, that every idle word that men shall “ speak, they shall give account thereof in “ the day of judgment. For by thy words  
“ thou

“thou shalt be justified, and by thy words  
 “thou shalt be CONDEMNED\*.”

It is vain for others to plead, that they do it through wantonness, or amusement merely. —What! will you wanton with the name of your God? Will you amuse yourselves by trifling with the most august, glorious and tremendous name in the universe? Give me leave to tell you, this is no trifling matter, unless you can suppose it a trifle to draw upon you the indignation and wrath of God, and in consequence of it, be thrust down to hell. Profane swearing is gross wickedness. It hath nothing to plead in its own favour. It shews that the heart is vile. That it remains in its natural darkness, estranged from God, and enmity against him. It has never yet perceived its need of Divine Grace to change it, or never yet effectually fought that grace, with earnest cries and truly penitential tears. It has never been properly touched, either with the judgments or with the mercies of God, nor with a proper sense of the

\* Matt. xii. 36, 37.

compassions of that Jesus, who suffered, and bled, and died on the cross.

Further, As the name of God is dishonoured by what generally goes under the name of profane swearing, at which decent people, as well as the truly religious, often profess themselves offended; so likewise is this holy name dishonoured and profaned by persons who flatter themselves with a complete freedom from profanity.

I now speak of the present fashionable, but ungodly, custom, of introducing the name of the Lord into men's common and easy conversation. This vice is now become so prevalent, that there are but few people, comparatively speaking, who are not guilty of it: very few indeed besides those who really fear God, and make conscience of their thoughts and words, as well as of their actions. In this way, we hear the Lord's name taken in vain by the poorest and the richest, the smallest and the greatest, the most unpolished and the most refined. This sin is admitted, without remorse and without shame,



shame, into all the fashionable circles, and cleaves to those who, in other respects, are the best bred and best behaved. In this one instance at least, the most polite and the most vulgar are upon a level.

This is a proof instead of a thousand, that it is beyond the power of education to make a man what he ought to be. Nothing will do, short of the teachings of the Holy Spirit. —With respect indeed to education, I am sorry to say, that this species of profanity of which I now speak, makes a guilty part of what is called *genteel* education; for the young find it in almost all their books of entertainment\*; of which they are frequently

\* The present rage for novel-reading is a very convincing proof of a vitiated taste. Such light trash as is generally found in this kind of writing, makes ten thousand vain, but not one wise. It is calculated to increase sensuality and profanity. It is fitted to deceive and mislead. It inspires with false notions of human kind and human affairs. It draws pictures much larger than life; and by raising expectation much beyond truth, it prepares the heart for the most bitter disappointments. Is not this one cause of the great unhappiness experienced by many in matrimonial connexions? This is a point which may deserve to be maturely considered by those who have the care of youth.

much

much more fond than of their Bibles; and thus are they poisoned from their cradle. Thus it is that such expressions as these abound so dreadfully in what is commonly termed, genteel conversation—Good Heavens! My God! Lord have mercy! with many others that might be mentioned. Servants, labourers and trades-people have their opportunities of hearing this language from their masters and superiors, and willingly suppose that there can be no great evil in such kind of expressions, because they are used by persons who are much more wise and learned than themselves; and thus almost the whole mass is contaminated; inasmuch, that the sacred name of the Divine Being is introduced, is interwoven, as it were, by men in general, into almost every sentence, till it is made nearly as common as yea or nay—to the grief of all pious minds—to the great scandal of religion—and, I fear, to the utter confusion and misery of multitudes, who call themselves Christians, but deport themselves utterly unworthy of that high and holy character.

All who have been so unhappy as to addict themselves to this horrid vice, would do well  
frequently

frequently to recollect the Third Commandment, and seriously consider how often they break it, and what is likely to be the consequence of breaking it. Thus saith their Creator and their Judge, "Thou shalt not  
 "take the name of the LORD thy GOD in  
 "VAIN: for the LORD will NOT hold  
 "him *guiltless* that taketh HIS NAME IN  
 "VAIN\*."

They also offend against the text who allow themselves in the wilful commission of any one known sin. This, instead of hallowing, is boldly dishonouring the name of God.— One known sin indulged, is sufficient to cut off our claim to dependence upon our heavenly Father, and to all hopes of his favour and blessing. Though this sin may be what the world would call a *little one*, yet of this we may be assured, it will be large enough to prove us rebels and not sons, and be strong enough to draw down judgments on our guilty heads.— If this sin be a public one, it shews the small regard we have for Man; if a private one, it proclaims aloud in Heaven's ear the contempt

\* Exod. xx, 7.

we have for God ; and in either case it is sure to meet with righteous vengeance.

Once more. They also offend against the text, who in any way or measure countenance sin in others. It becomes all men to be zealous for their God, and to do all that lies in their power to have his name hallowed and honoured upon the earth. No man would like to have his best and dearest friend rendered contemptible in the eye of the world by a free and impertinent use of his name. No good subject, no subject that properly loves his sovereign, could be pleased with seeing his laws trampled on, or disregarded. In either of these cases, such a man as I have described, could not be indifferent. He would immediately feel himself interested, and act accordingly. Apply this to the subject in hand, and then reflect—Where can be the love of that man to his heavenly Friend and Sovereign, who can hear his holy name taken in vain, and see his righteous laws violated, with thoughtless pleasure, or cold indifference? I might bring the matter still nearer, and ask—What would you think of that Son who

F                      cherished



cherished not a tender regard for his Father's honour?

Judge then whether those can be said to hallow the name of God in their own hearts and persons, who encourage, or are indifferent to, the profanation of it in others; or who, without sincere grief and real godly sorrow, can see any of the divine laws broken or trifled with? From every view of the subject, we are brought to this conclusion, that every man sins against the text who encourages sin in others: and every man may be said to encourage sin in others, who does not from his heart disapprove, and by his life and manner discountenance and rebuke it.

IV. I now proceed to shew, very briefly, *why* the name of God should be hallowed, according to the senses given to that word, by all men. I shall select but two reasons from many. The first may of itself be thought sufficient; which is, that this is the end of our being. It is the great end for which we were created. God made us for his own honour. So far, therefore, as we regard and  
endeavour

endeavour to advance that, so far we answer the end of our existence; and no further than we do advance that, is the prime end of our creation answered. So that all who have not been devoted sincerely to the honour of God in heart and life, have been living contrary to, and violating the ends for which, they were created. And this, to a person whose conscience is not altogether devoid of feeling, must be a painful consideration.

Again. All men ought to hallow the name of God, because he is worthy. He is worthy not only as a Being of infinite perfections, but particularly as it regards his kind and parental conduct towards us; and that, not merely as it respects his creating us and bringing us into life, and adorning us with the powers of reason and understanding, but also for all the rich variety of providences he has exercised in our favour, and for all the bounties of his liberal hand, in bestowing on us a regular supply of food and raiment, and giving us richly all things to enjoy; and above all, for giving Christ Jesus to

die for the redemption of such as should believe, repent, and live according to his pure Gospel. Numerous other reasons I might mention, but these are sufficient to shew us, that all men are bound, in point of duty and gratitude, to hallow, to honour, and to glorify, the blessed name of God. It appears, that we not only derive our life from him; but also, that to him we are indebted for all the blessings and all the lawful comforts of this life; and for all the hopes of a better through Jesus Christ, when we shall have done with faithfully serving him here.

I shall conclude in the few but instructive words of Dr. John Edwards.—When we pray that God's name may be hallowed, we pray that he 'may be celebrated in all his appellations, attributes, and works of creation and providence: in his word, will and laws; in his worship; in the day set apart by him for that purpose; in his servants and ministers—in every good man that bears his image. In a word, we are to pray that God in all things may be glorified.'

'Secondly.

‘ Secondly. We are taught and reminded  
 ‘ to practise the subject of this petition. We  
 ‘ must sanctify God’s name, as often as we  
 ‘ call upon him. We must, in the prayers  
 ‘ we offer to him, shew all that reverence  
 ‘ which is due to him, be thoroughly sensible  
 ‘ of the infinite Majesty we appear before,  
 ‘ and dispose ourselves to call upon him in that  
 ‘ holy manner that becomes us. Let our  
 ‘ thoughts, desires and affections be suitable  
 ‘ to this divine work, which we have the  
 ‘ honour to be employed in. Thus let us  
 ‘ glorify God, as often as we pray to him.  
 ‘ Let us also shew the influence of this petition  
 ‘ in our lives as well as in our prayers. And  
 ‘ lastly, as this is the first and leading part of  
 ‘ the Lord’s prayer, remember that the glory  
 ‘ of God ought to be the first and chiefest  
 ‘ aim in every thing. Let it direct us then  
 ‘ in all we undertake. In all that we do let  
 ‘ our grand end and design be, to hallow  
 ‘ God’s holy name, and to bring honour, and  
 ‘ glory to him. As this has the first place in  
 ‘ the Lords prayer, so let it have the same  
 ‘ through the whole course of our actions.’



## LECTURE IV.

MATTHEW vi. 10.

THY KINGDOM COME.

**N**OTHING can be more agreeable to a  
 a good man, than to feel religion flourish  
 within his own breast, and to see it prosper  
 in the world; and therefore there is nothing  
 he more ardently prays to God for. ‘Tell  
 ‘ me not, says he, of riches and honours that  
 ‘ I can keep but a few years, at longest, and  
 ‘ may be deprived of in a much shorter time.  
 ‘ Tell me not of long life, and great enjoyments  
 ‘ on earth. My heart is bent upon much  
 ‘ higher treasures and far nobler objects.—  
 ‘ Nothing will satisfy me, but the honour  
 ‘ that cometh from God only—but the riches  
 ‘ which earth cannot afford, and which time  
 ‘ cannot destroy. No consideration can ad-  
 ‘ minister peace to my conscience, but a firm  
 ‘ persuasion that I am every day preparing to  
 ‘ die,

‘ die, and to enter upon that kingdom where  
 ‘ God displays his brightest glory, and fills all  
 ‘ around with blifs.’

No petition will fuch a man offer more  
 freely or more feelingly to his Maker, than  
 this—*thy Kingdom come*.—In difcourfing from  
 thefe words, I fhall obferve the following  
 order :

I. Remark that Almighty God is a King.

II. Attempt to fhew what we are to under-  
 ftand by his kingdom. And,

III. What is implied in praying that his  
 kingdom may come. And may the Lord  
 add his bleffing.

I. The firft thing which ftrikes our atten-  
 tion is, that the God whom we ferve, is a  
 King. The fpot of earth on which we dwell,  
 has been divided and fubdivided into many  
 parts and portions ; fome of which are called  
 by the high-founding names of kingdoms and  
 empires. On this globe there live and reign

mortals like ourselves, that have obtained the great, the flattering, the envied, though really unenviable, titles, of kings and emperors.

To attain this honour, no toils are thought too great ; no difficulties too mighty ; no pains too painful ; no cost too precious ; no sacrifices too dear. If what is aimed at can but be accomplished ; if the glittering temptation can be grasped ; if the darling object can but be obtained, after all the difficulties with which it was surrounded are vanquished, it is supposed, that the happy possession will soon compensate for every inconvenience. And yet, when all is done, what is there gained ? What ! but the painful pre-eminence of being at the head of a certain number of men, and being acknowledged the first man among many ? What ! but having the name of possessing a certain portion of this earth, which the eyes of its possessor will never behold, and with which his heart will never be satisfied ? What ! but a crown laden with cares and beset with thorns, and robes of royalty that will soon lose their lustre, and at a not far distant period, perish with their  
wearer,

wearer, and turn to dust! The glory of man is of short continuance, and all mortal distinctions must quickly fade and die.

How infinitely superior then is the mighty King, for the prosperity of whose kingdom we this evening pray, to the kings and rulers of this world? "For God is the king of all the earth. God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. His kingdom is from everlasting to everlasting, and he ruleth over all\*"—over all beings, all worlds, and all events. In a strict and absolute sense, perhaps, there is none that deserves the high honour of being called a king, beside God himself. In this view the words of St. Paul to Timothy are admirable—"The blessed and only Potentate†;" as though all beings besides were utterly unworthy to be looked upon as potentates, or sovereigns, and that the name was given to some among the children of men by way of condescension, or courtesy.

\* Psal. xlvii.

† 1 Tim. vi. 15.



The God whom we serve, let us always remember, is a king. He is *the King eternal*. The honour of his service, therefore, is so much the greater. There is no honour like to that which springs from ready and sincere obedience to our sovereign Lord. For as a king he has a system of laws, the most pure, the most equitable, the most useful, that can be imagined. These laws are recorded in the Bible, ready for the inspection of every enquiring eye. They all have, and deserve, the character of being *holy, just and good*; and no good subject will choose to be ignorant of them, lest he should unknowingly transgress them; and knowing them, he will surely wish to pay a sacred regard to all their injunctions and prohibitions.

As a king, our God will subdue all the enemies of his faithful servants. He has it in his power to crush them at any moment, be they ever so many, or ever so mighty. In all ages of the world he hath shewn himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts have been upright with him. What therefore, though we are called to “wrestle,” not merely  
“against

“ against flesh and blood,” as St. Paul intimates: “ but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places\*,” let us not be discouraged, for our God and King is omniscient to discern, omnipotent to defend, almighty to save. He can bind all the foes of our souls in chains, and easily “ bruise Satan under our feet.” “ He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.”

When, therefore, we repeat the Lord’s Prayer, let it revive those ideas in our minds. If God has a kingdom, he is, of course, a King. If he is a King, he is an eternal and universal King : he is a wise, powerful, and irresistible King : he is a righteous and good King : and, consequently, he must be trusted and obeyed. In all our straits, therefore, it becomes us to say, O God, our King, be thou our deliverer, “ for without thee, vain is the help of man.” This is language, I say, which will well become us, provided we make it our grand care and concern to honour and

\* Eph. vi.

glorify

glorify our King, the Lord of Host, by paying a conscientious regard to all that he hath commanded. And in order to this, whenever we reflect that the God whom we profess to serve, is a King, it will be proper for us to consider the very solemn charge given by Paul to Timothy, which runs in these words—" Fight the good fight of faith : lay  
 " hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also  
 " called. I give thee charge in the fight of  
 " God, who quickeneth all things; and before  
 " Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep  
 " this commandment without spot, unrebuke-  
 " able, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus  
 " Christ: which in his times he shall shew,  
 " who is the blessed and only Potentate, the  
 " King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who  
 " only hath immortality, dwelling in the light  
 " which no man can approach unto, whom  
 " no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be  
 " honour and power everlasting\*."

II. I shall attempt to shew what we are to understand by God's Kingdom. And we may

\* 1 Tim, vi.

conceive of our heavenly Father's kingdom under four distinctions; or to the word *Kingdom* we may apply four distinct ideas. First, there is God's kingdom of PROVIDENCE. In this kingdom he appears as directing the affairs, overruling the actions, controlling the wills, and appointing the conditions, of men. In this view, he is the great Arbiter of the Universe. "He putteth down one, and setteth  
 " up another. He advanceth kings to thrones,  
 " and raiseth beggars from the dunghill, that  
 " they may sit among princes. He woundeth  
 " and he maketh whole. He killeth and he  
 " maketh alive; and none can deliver out of  
 " his hand, nor say unto him, What doest  
 " thou? or Why doest thou so?" He is Lord, and there is none beside him; God, and none can resist him. Further

The kingdom of God may signify his CHURCH, or RELIGION, in the world; and more particularly does this sense relate to the GOSPEL, which was about to be established when Christ taught his disciples to offer this most excellent prayer. In this sense the word *Kingdom* appears to have been used by  
 the



the Saviour himself. It seems not unlikely that this is its signification, where our Lord threatens the obstinate and unbelieving Jews with a fore punishment in these words—  
 “ Therefore,” that is, because ye reject me, the Messiah, “ Therefore I say unto you, the  
 “ kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and  
 “ given to a nation bringing forth the fruits  
 “ thereof.” No reasonable doubt seems to remain, that by the kingdom of God here, is meant the Gospel; which was afterwards transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles. I might produce several other instances to the same effect, but let this suffice to shew us one of the senses in which the word *Kingdom* is used, when it signifies the kingdom of our God.

Again. There is what, in a more eminent sense, may be called the kingdom of GRACE, and which we are to understand as included in our text. This requires to be particularly explained. And in order to it, let it be remarked that there is a dominion of property, and a dominion of person. Dominion of person may be subdivided into dominion of body and dominion of soul.

Now

Now there *is* a sense in which Almighty God *exercises* an *entire* sovereignty over unconverted men, and a sense in which he does *not*. His dominion over them is complete as it respects their life, their health, their reason, and their prosperity. But in a certain sense, and to a certain degree, his dominion over their wills, their hearts, and their souls, is incomplete. Under these expressions I must be understood to include men's affections, inclinations, desires, and imaginations. And with respect to the general exercise of these, in all wilful, impenitent sinners, I pronounce the divine dominion incomplete.

When man fell into sin, he fell from God. He plucked himself from his Maker's hand, and declared against his sovereign rule. He became an apostate and a rebel, and withdrew himself from the pure, the perfect, and easy government of God. When men multiplied, vices multiplied with them; insomuch that wherever there was human nature, there also was sin. And the reason was, the whole mass of human nature was corrupted, and in love  
with

with sin. As were the parents, so were the children. All followed the evil inclinations of their depraved hearts.

To this the blessed God himself bears awful testimony. We are told—"God saw that  
 "the wickedness of man was great in the  
 "earth, and that every imagination of the  
 "thoughts of his heart was only evil con-  
 "tinually\*." And in the next chapter we have an account of the destruction of a whole world, eight persons only excepted. As a proof that all creatures were still in their Maker's power, so that he could do by them what seemed good in his sight, though their wills were disobedient to his law, he brought his mighty flood upon the earth, and cut off the transgressors. This was the fruit of sin. This was the miserable end of miserable offenders. Here you see a complete dominion over the body, so as to be able to destroy it at any moment, and by any means, without possibility of resistance or recovery. Here you see a dominion over the soul also, so far as to dislodge it from the body, and command it

\* Gen. vi.

into an eternal state, there to be judged for its offences, and punished for its crimes. But there was no dominion *in* the soul, so as to overrule its various sinful appetites and passions, and render it holy. Or, in other words, there was no dominion of GRACE. The kingdom of grace was not set up in the soul. But instead of the reign of grace, there was the reign of lust.

After this plain example, my meaning might be brought into a small compass, and be conveyed to you in few words. But it may be useful to enlarge this article.

All mankind are born in sin and with a love to sin, and all mankind will follow the course of nature, in all its great and leading propensities, just as rivers flow downward, and sparks fly upward, till nature is changed by grace. For though education and example are not without their effect, yet their effect is too feeble to change the man. They may humanize and civilize him, but they cannot spiritualize him. They may serve as a slender bank to dam up and keep natural corruption within



within moderate limits for a time, but when temptations rise, opportunity serves, and all circumstances join in an invitation to transgress, then the slender barrier will soon be removed, the feeble boundaries be quickly overflowed, and the neighbouring country, either publicly or privately, deluged with vice. In a word, sinful nature will be sinful nature, whatever appearances it may assume, till it is corrected, improved, and sanctified by divine grace.

It follows, that men who are in a natural state, are not under the dominion of grace, but under the dominion of sin. Consequently, *they are the servants of sin*; slaves, in a higher or lower sense, in a greater or less degree, to their lust; and the subjects of Satan, instead of the subjects of God.

Now when men are brought out of this state, when they are enlightened in their minds, converted to God, and become holy in their hearts and lives, this is the pleasing effect of God's all-powerful and transforming grace. And when men are thus changed, they hate the sins in which they once delighted;

delighted ; they love the Lord against whom they once rebelled ; they rejoice to perform those duties they once despised, and the felicity of their souls is now composed of a sweet sense of the divine favour, and a humble, cheerful submission to the divine will, in all things.

You perceive that there is a wide difference between the two states here described. The former of them I call the kingdom of sin and Satan, the latter, the kingdom of grace and of God. Under this particular, then, I have but one thing more to do ; and that is, to shew you that the distinction which has just been made, prevails in the scriptures of truth, and therefore is not from man, but from God.

In the first place I beg your attention to the words of Christ. (Matt. xii. 26.) In that chapter the wicked Pharisees charged Christ with casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. In the verse just referred to, our Lord answers them thus—“ If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself ; how shall then his kingdom stand ? ” Here it is

plainly acknowledged, that Satan hath a kingdom in this world. And this kingdom is erected in the hearts of men who are not converted to God, and there Satan lives and reigns: and if they remain unconverted and unrenewed, they must have their unhappy portion with him hereafter. In full agreement with this, our Lord says, “ Many shall come  
 “ from the east and west, and shall sit down  
 “ with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in  
 “ the kingdom of heaven. But the children  
 “ of the kingdom,” or the subjects of Satan,  
 “ shall be cast out into outer darkness: there  
 “ shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth\*.”

A deliverance from the kingdom of sin and Satan, is celebrated by St. Paul, with great thankfulness to God. “ Giving thanks unto  
 “ the Father,” says he, “ which hath made  
 “ us meet to be partakers of the inheritance  
 “ of the saints in light; who hath delivered  
 “ us from the power,” or dominion, “ of  
 “ darkness, and hath translated us into the  
 “ kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we

\* Mat. viii. 11, 12.

“ have

“ have redemption through his blood, even  
 “ the forgiveness of sin\*.”

In harmony with this, are the words of Jesus to the Jews. They told Christ that they were Abrahams seed, and appeared not to have the least doubt of obtaining heaven, and of being happy hereafter as Abraham, their progenitor, was. But Jesus said unto them, “ Ye are of your father the Devil, and  
 “ the lusts of your father ye will do. Verily,  
 “ verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth  
 “ sin, is the servant of sin. If the Son there-  
 “ fore shall make you free, ye shall be free  
 “ indeed†.”

The same alarming truths, respecting sin and sinners, are declared in the plainest manner by the apostle John. “ He that  
 “ committeth sin is of the devil :” a subject of the devil ; a child of the devil ; “ for the  
 “ devil sinneth from the beginning. For  
 “ this purpose the Son of God was manifested,  
 “ that he might destroy the works of the  
 “ devil. Whosoever is born of God, doth

\* Col. i.

† John viii.



“ not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in  
 “ him : and he cannot sin,” wilfully, “ because  
 “ he is born of God. In this the children  
 “ of God are manifest, and the children of  
 “ the devil : whosoever doth not righteousness,  
 “ is not of God, neither he that loveth not  
 “ his brother\*.”

These are the declarations of scripture, and  
 I hope my dear hearers will be so wise as to  
 mark and remember them, and so happy as to  
 profit by them.

But the dominions of sin and grace are  
 no where, perhaps, more accurately described,  
 than by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans.  
 Speaking to those whose hearts God had  
 changed by his spirit, he says, “ Know ye not,  
 “ that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to  
 “ obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey ;  
 “ whether of sin unto death, or of obedience  
 “ unto righteousness. Being then made free  
 “ from sin, or free from its reigning power,  
 “ ye became servants unto righteousness.—  
 “ Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed

\* 1 John iii. 8, &c.

“ unto

“ unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus  
 “ Christ our Lord. For sin shall not have  
 “ dominion over you : for ye are under the  
 “ reign, the power, the dominion of grace.  
 “ Being then made free from sin, and become  
 “ servants to God, ye have your fruit unto  
 “ holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the  
 “ wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is  
 “ eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord\*.”

I have dwelled the longer, and been the more  
 particular, on this part of our subject, on ac-  
 count of its own infinite importance, and the  
 unspeakable consequence it is of to mankind,  
 clearly to understand it. For until they do  
 understand it, they will be pleased with their  
 present state ; they will be satisfied with their  
 carnal, sinful nature, though Christ himself  
 hath expressly declared, that “ Except a man  
 “ be born again,” or changed and made spi-  
 ritual by divine grace, “ he cannot see the  
 “ kingdom of God † ;” and though the whole  
 tenor of scripture solemnly proclaims this truth  
 to the world, that unless a man become a new  
 creature in Christ Jesus, he cannot be saved ‡.

\* Rom. vi.

† John iii. 3.

‡ Gal. vi. 14, 15.

Next to the kingdom of grace, it comes in order to speak of the kingdom of GLORY. And this, I apprehend, is eminently included in the text. The kingdom of glory is the kingdom of grace perfected in heaven. By *Kingdom*, then, in this sense, is meant the happiness of souls in an eternal world, where the glory of God shall be illustriously displayed in their complete redemption. There is the richest and noblest kingdom of our God.—There is his highest throne, and most glorious crown. There the spirits of just men are made perfect, and there salvation is secure.

The foregoing particulars, known and remembered, may help us to pray with greater understanding when we utter this petition before the Lord—*Thy kingdom come*. And that we may be further assisted in making our daily prayer to our Father which is in Heaven, I shall

III. Attempt to shew what is implied in this petition—*Thy kingdom come*.

And the petition implies a wish in the heart of the speaker, that the kingdom of heaven,

or

or the Gospel of God, so called, may be successful and prevalent in the earth. That the word of God may have "free course, run and "be glorified." That all nations, in God's good time, may be favoured with the Gospel, and receive it. That they may be sensible of its superlative value, and treat it accordingly. That all Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, and others, may forsake their idols, and their false refuges and dependencies, of one kind and another, and embrace by faith the living Jesus. And in one word, that "the kingdoms of "this world may become the kingdoms of our "Lord and of his Christ," as is intimated in scripture shall one day be the case. Saying, *Thy kingdom come*, implies that the worshipper not only wishes all this in the secret of his heart, but that he also makes it his sincere prayer to God that it may, in his time, be actually accomplished.

Our text further implies a desire and a consequent prayer, that true religion may flourish among men, where the Gospel *is* already known : or in other words, it implies a desire that the kingdom of *grace* may be  
extended ;



extended ; that it may be set up in the hearts and souls of those who are in a state of nature.

For it is evident, by what hath been said on the preceding head, that men may be favoured with the Gospel, and not be materially bettered by it. They may hear sermons in public, and have the Bible in their houses, and yet be *without God in the world* ; without his fear, without his love, and without his grace. Just as a man may have money in his pocket, but refuse to use it ; or a medicinal receipt from his physician, and yet die for want of taking what is recommended.

Now our offering to God the petition in our text implies, if we consider what we do, and mean what we say, that we are really concerned for our own, and other's, salvation. That we do most seriously desire to have corruption mortified ; pride, passion, anger, covetousness, and every other inordinate and sinful propensity, subdued ; that neither we nor our fellow-creatures may be any longer, " lovers of pleasure" and of sin, " more than lovers of God." It implies, that we wish  
ourselves

ourselves and others to be humble, spiritual, self-denying, prayerful, and watchful; delighting in all good, and hating all evil, and in every respect like unto Christ, in our minds, wills, and dispositions; that we may take up our cross, and follow him in the actions of our life, so far as we are able, whoever shall oppose, ridicule, or revile. It implies, in one word, that we wish ourselves and others no longer to live according to the course of our corrupt nature, no longer to be guided by the inclinations of the flesh, but to be influenced and led by the spirit of God, in all things; and that Christ may rule and reign in our hearts, till our very thoughts are brought into subjection to his holy law.

And when the kingdom of God, that is, of his grace, is thus within men, it makes them happy; for it "is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." In full agreement with what you have just heard, the petition in our text implies also, that we wish the kingdom of glory to be advanced. That we desire the elect of God may be called in from the east and from the west, from the  
north

north and from the south, that mankind may be prepared to meet their God in judgment, that the kingdom of Satan may be destroyed from the earth, that "the wickedness of the wicked may come to a perpetual end," and that "the just," through Christ "may be established" eternally in the heavens, without even an apprehension of ever sinning or ever sorrowing any more. O blessed state of sweet delight! May we daily hasten to it by the most careful preparation of soul! From the whole I remark

First; That we must not only pray, but act agreeably to our prayers; if we do not, we shall be found shamefully inconsistent with ourselves, and our very prayers will condemn us. It becomes us, therefore, to do all that God's spirit shall enable us, to promote the Gospel and the holiness thereof, in and among ourselves, our friends, our neighbours, and all with whom we have to do.

Secondly. Let us be often meditating on the last judgment, when the kingdom of God will come in all its glory, in all its majesty, and

and in all its terror : when the wicked will be thrust down to hell, and the pure in heart shall see God, to their everlasting joy.

Finally. Let all the spiritually minded now comfort themselves under all their sorrows, with the prospect of the glory that is to be revealed. You are going, you are going, Christians, to receive a kingdom, and God your Father will wipe all tears from your eyes.

LEC-



## LECTURE V.

MATTHEW vi. 10.

THY WILL BE DONE.

**T**HIS, to the God of nature, is language that well becomes his dependent creatures. I hope I shall be looked upon as being friendly to you, as well as to myself, in saying I wish our hearts more frequently and more feelingly agreed with our lips, when we utter these significant words ; *Thy will be done !*

May the Lord grant, that our assembling together at this time, and meditating upon this passage, may be the happy means of quickening our souls to the great duty here enjoined, and of making us more exact and conscientious in our attention to it through the future part of life. And to this petition may all the people, with seriousness of soul, say—*Amen.*

In discoursing from the text, I shall attempt to shew,

I. That the Lord's will is to be *done* by us.

II. That it is to be *suffered* by us. And

III. The *reasons* for it.

I. The Lord's will is to be *done* by man.

When Almighty God raised the beautiful frame of nature, and placed man at the head of this lower creation, we cannot reasonably suppose, that he designed him to be an idle spectator of the works of Godhead. Activity of body and mind is friendly to both. Some gentle employments, I apprehend, suited to his situation, man had in innocence, beside those which might be called the more immediate exercises of the soul ; such as contemplation, mental prayer, and sweet communion with his God.

And of this we may be assured, that whatever he did, his Creator's will was the rule. To regard this divine rule was a duty eternally binding

binding on man, and therefore cannot be broken to this moment, nor even to the latest moment of time. In a state of innocence, whatever was right, was also easy, and duty, inclination, and pleasure were the same.—Now, unhappily, it is otherwise : the duty remains, but the will is gone. Great is the backwardness to perform, and even to understand, what is solemnly required. Be it our first care then, at this time, seriously to reflect on the sacred import of these words—*Thy will be done.*

And surely, whenever we utter these words before the Lord, we pray that we may be *obedient*. I do not say, that we always mean this ; but I must be allowed to say, that we *ought* to mean it; for this is the plain, proper, and native meaning of the words, and what was designed by their heavenly author. And as every sensible, serious soul is ready to allow, that we pray, or ought to pray, that the will of God may be done by us, the next object is, with all who would be consistent and sincere, to learn and understand what the will of the Lord is. And in order to this, we must  
not

not ask the world, nor enquire of men who wish to have as little acquaintance with their Maker as possible, for they will immediately tell us, that our Creator's will is, that we should "enjoy ourselves;" a proposition which, though true in its principle, is utterly false in their application of it: for by "enjoyment," *they* mean, an indulgence to such amusements and practices, pleasures and pursuits, as would engage us most effectually to forget God, and to set our minds upon the vain trifles of this fleeting life, till we are forced to leave them. To enjoy yourself, in the dialect of the world, is to fall in with the manners of the world, and to make the fashions of the world your Bible. You are not in any measure to discountenance, much less to contradict and counteract the vanities and follies you meet with, but to appear pleased with all, and to soothe every one in his own way, without even venturing to suppose he may be wrong in word or deed.

If you adopt this conduct, the world will receive you: it will acknowledge you for its own, and doubt not but you will have great enjoyment. It will conclude then, that you

H

are



are dispossessed of your sowness and freed from your gall: that you have learned the great secret of felicity, and consequently, that henceforward you are to be the happy man. Or if the people of the world do not really believe this, they undoubtedly pretend it: and therefore if we enquire of them what we are to do, we shall receive an answer which, in plain language, will amount to this—that we are to consult present gratification; please our appetites; join the company of the cheerful, who know and engross all the arts of human enjoyment; banish from our minds all gloomy, that is, all *serious* thought of futurity; obey our lusts instead of our Creator; keep true to our passions instead of the commandments; never meditate on death till we are sure it is near us, and never suffer the idea of eternity to dwell upon our spirits a moment, till we are thrust into it: and that is, in other words, never to suffer the fear of hell to interrupt a single pleasure, till we are finally excluded from all pleasure in that place of torment.

I say, this is the purport of the world's advice, when it advises you to become its disciples, though the tremendous consequences are care-

fully

fully disguised ; and if you glance at them, they are as boldly denied : and, that you may be encouraged to walk in the paths of sensuality, with a readiness of tongue as well as a hardened wickedness of heart you are told, that as God delights in the happiness of his creatures, therefore you are freely to gratify the propensities of that nature which you have received, and that gratification is the proper, as it is the natural, enjoyment of human kind.

Alas ! what reason have we to grieve, that so many of our fellow-creatures are in this deplorable state ! A state of spiritual blindness, darkness, and complete ignorance. Living to the dishonour of God, to the injury of many who are influenced by their example, and, there is reason to believe, to the utter ruin of their own souls. Instead, therefore, of going to them to learn the will of our Creator, let us pity and pray for them, and turn to the pure word of God for our own instruction. This is the command of Christ, “ Search the Scriptures\*, ” and if we do search them, they will teach us a very different lesson from the world. For they will inform us, in the

\* John v. 39.

First place, that God requires us to withdraw our affections from the world, and to set them on himself. This is the voice of God in his word, to us who call ourselves the disciples of his Son Jesus—"Set your affection "on things above, not on things on the "earth\*"—For, according to your profession, *ye are dead*, dead to the vanities, the wickednesses and all the improper expectations, desires, and hopes of this world, and the *life*, the very *soul*, of your happiness, "is hid with "Christ in God." And if your pretensions are sincere, "when Christ who is your life "shall appear, then shall ye also appear with "him in glory. Mortify therefore your "members which are upon the earth," and make it your grand business, your daily care, to prepare for heaven. "Be not conformed "to this world: but be ye transformed by "the renewing of your mind†."

"Love not the world, neither the things "that are in the world. If any man love "the world, the love of the Father is not in "him‡." "Know ye not that the friendship "of the world, is enmity with God?—

\* Col. iii. † Rom. xii. 2. ‡ 1 John ii. 15.

“ Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the  
“ world is the enemy of God\*.”

“ Be not conformed to this world, nor  
“ follow a multitude to do evil :” but “ enter  
“ ye in at the strait gate ; for wide is the gate,  
“ and broad is the way that leadeth to de-  
“ struction, and many there be that go in  
“ thereat : because strait is the gate, and narrow  
“ is the way which leadeth unto” eternal  
“ life, and few there be that find it.”

This is fully declarative of the mind and  
will of God, with regard to the views he  
would have us form of this world, and of the  
conduct he would have us observe towards it.  
But that the strongest fence that can be, may  
be set around our hearts, always too prone to  
break the bonds and leap the boundaries of  
religion, I shall also call in to our aid the  
words of our blessed Lord. “ Whosoever,”  
says he “ will come after me, let him deny  
“ himself, and take up his cross, and follow  
“ me. For what shall it profit a man, if he  
“ shall gain the whole world, and lose his

\* James iv. 4.



“ own soul? Or what shall a man give in  
 “ exchange for his soul? Whosoever there-  
 “ fore shall be ashamed of me, and of my  
 “ words, in this adulterous and sinful genera-  
 “ tion, of him also shall the Son of man be  
 “ ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of  
 “ his Father, with the holy angels\*.”

Now, my dear hearers, are you ready to reply to all this, in the sincerity of your hearts—Lord, *thy will be done*. This is the trial; for if we cannot say it, when it comes to be applied to particulars, we have never yet said it in knowledge and in truth. When the Almighty says to us in his holy word, “ If you are the  
 “ friends of the world, I shall account and  
 “ treat you as my enemies, and therefore if  
 “ you would avoid my heavy displeasure and  
 “ enjoy my favour, you must live contrary to  
 “ the evil customs and maxims of the world,  
 “ take up your cross and bear the world’s  
 “ reproach :” if, when the Lord says this to us, or what is equal to this, we cannot unfeignedly say, Father, *thy will be done*, and design by this expression to be obedient to the

\* Mark viii. 34, &c.

whole will of God, we certainly have not his spirit, are wholly destitute of the power of his religion, and have nothing more than the form of godliness; which will leave us more miserable at last than we should have been, if we had never heard the name of religion, or known that there was such a thing as godliness in the universe.

I am the more plain and particular, that none of my hearers may deceive themselves, and destroy their souls.

Secondly, We learn from the Scriptures, that another part of the divine will is, that we should love God as we hate sin. When it is said unto each of us in particular, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind\*," I suppose there are few, if any, who would not reply, Father, *thy will be done*. But who, at the time of uttering these words, properly considers all the consequences of this reply? Who considers himself as really *bound* to love the Lord his God in this manner, and who is there that seriously reflects on what

\* Deut. vi. 5. Mark xii. 30.

is implied in it, as it regards both heart and life? As it regards the heart, it undoubtedly implies, that nothing is to be set up there in competition with the Lord. That no darling object, no dear delight, no favourite passion, no pleasing desire, no flattering prospect, no ambitious motive, is to draw off the affections, or in any measure warp, or turn off, the bent of our souls, from God. It implies, that we view God as the chief good, as the all-sufficient, all-satisfying, portion of our nature. It implies, not merely that we assent to, or even believe, this truth; but also that we *feel* it, and desire to *live* under its powerful impression; and that we take God accordingly, and rely upon him, as our inexhaustible treasure; and that whatever happens to us, we think ourselves safe and happy, if we are blessed with his favour.

If I say any thing more as it regards the life, I must say, it implies that we will make the cause of God our own, in this world. That we will be tender of his honour; that by his aid we will stedfastly set our faces against all sin, do what in us lies to promote holiness and righteousness among men, rejoice  
when

when religion prospers, grieve when it declines, take up the cross of Jesus as our brightest ornament, and, in God's strength, be faithful unto death, and rather die than commit iniquity.

This is to love God, and this is the divine will concerning us. And hence you may further learn, that it is the will of God that we should be *holy*; for holiness, both of mind and manners, is evidently included in this love, when properly understood. And therefore, upon the article now under consideration, I only quote a few plain and express passages of Scripture. "This," says St. Paul, "is the will of God, *even your sanctification\**."—The apostle Peter expresses himself in these words—"As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy†."

Permit me now to exhort you, in the same sacred language, to "mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection,

\* 1 Thes. iv. 3.

† 1 Pet. i. 15, &c.

evil



“ evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which  
 “ is idolatry: for which things’ sake the wrath  
 “ of God cometh upon the children of dis-  
 “ obedience. Put off therefore blasphemy and  
 “ filthy communication out of your mouth,  
 “ and lie not one to another\*.” “ Gird up the  
 “ loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to  
 “ the end, for the grace that is to be brought  
 “ unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;  
 “ as obedient children, not fashioning your-  
 “ selves according to the former lusts, in your  
 “ ignorance. *But as he which hath called you*  
 “ *is holy, so be ye holy†.*” “ I beseech you  
 “ therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,  
 “ that you present your bodies a living sacrifice,  
 “ holy, acceptable unto God, which is your  
 “ reasonable service‡.”

Do you hear and notice, my brethren, the  
 voice of God to you? Are you all saying in  
 your hearts, Our Father, which art in heaven—  
*thy will be done?*

Another thing which the Scriptures inform  
 us to be the will of God, is, that we should all  
 love one another. We are not only to speak

\* Col. iii.    † 1 Pet. i. 13, &c.    ‡ Rom. xii. 1.

fair to each others face, but to love one another cordially at heart. We are to be kind, forbearing, and forgiving. Our Lord hath commanded us to “ Love our enemies, “ to bless them that curse us, to do good to “ them that hate us, and to pray for them that “ despitefully use us and persecute us\*.” And the same Lord hath assured us, that “ if we “ forgive not men their trespasses, neither will “ our Father forgive us our trespasses†.”

The apostle Paul tells us, that we are to “ do good unto all men, and especially unto “ them who are of the household of faith‡.” So we are to love all men, for the common nature that is in us, and for God’s sake, who is the Creator of all men : but especially are we to love all the holy and faithful in Christ Jesus. All that bear his image, and “ walk even as he “ walked,” are to be particularly dear and precious to one another.

If we have this grace of LOVE, we shall certainly comply with the word of God, when it commands us to “ put off anger, wrath, and “ malice, out of our mouth ;” and we shall

\* Mat. v. 44.

† Mat. vi. 15.

‡ Gal. vi. 10.

“ put

“ put on,” as it is further commanded, “ as  
 “ the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels  
 “ of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind,  
 “ meekness, long-suffering : forbearing one  
 “ another, and forgiving one another, if any  
 “ man have a quarrel,” or complaint, “ against  
 “ any : even as Christ forgave, so also shall  
 “ we\*.”

Let it be remembered then, that we are to love all men : and that, while we hate and detest the *actions* of the wicked, we are to pity, and pray for, their *persons*. The sincere followers of Christ, however, are to have our highest regards, whether they are rich or poor, great or small, in the eye of the world.

And can you, my dear hearers, answer, in the language of the text, *Thy will be done ?* Father, my soul consents, and I am willing it shall be even as thou hast commanded ? If so, it is well.

Thus I have instanced in some of the great and leading duties of our holy religion, and endeavoured to convince you that we ought to

\* Col. iii.

apply the text to them in all its force. And in the duties mentioned, you may suppose all others included, because the same *principle* applies to all. And moreover, it may not be improper to remark, that the single, but unspeakably important duty of LOVE, implies all the rest; for if we properly love God, we shall dread to offend him, and delight to please him: and if we properly love our neighbour, and that is, according to the divine rule, to *love him as ourselves*; in this case, we shall never wilfully injure a fellow-creature, but rejoice to serve him. In this case also it must be observed, there would be an end of deceit, of lying, of theft, of defrauding, and of all kinds of wickedness now practised by man towards man.

I shall now close this head with remarking to you, that when we say to our heavenly Father, *Thy will be done on earth*, we mean, or ought to mean, that we beg from Almighty God a sufficiency of grace for ourselves, and also pray that others may likewise obtain a sufficiency for themselves, to do the whole will of God: that we and they may make the revealed will



will of God the constant rule of our thoughts, words and actions: and that, “finally, brethren,” we may at all times be cheerfully ready to perform “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report” among them that have been taught, and are made spiritually wise, by God’s Holy Spirit. Father, says the renewed soul, *thy will be done.*

II. I shall now very briefly shew that the will of God is to be *endured*, or *suffered*, cheerfully by man. The former is commonly called the active, and this the passive sense, of the text. Perhaps I should speak more correctly of my design under this head, if I said, I shall attempt to shew you what we ought to understand ourselves as *saying*, with regard to our *suffering* the will of God, when we utter these words—*Thy will be done.*

And I think we ought to understand ourselves as saying to him on whom we depend for *life, breath, and all things*, that we desire  
 grace

grace absolutely to resign ourselves to his disposal, with regard to our life, our health, our ease, and our temporal circumstances; also with regard to the life, the health, and the general welfare of our families, and friends; together with the welfare of our country, and the world at large.

We say in effect, ‘ Lord, here am I, do  
 ‘ with me as seemeth good in thy sight. Send  
 ‘ me either prosperity or adversity, comfort  
 ‘ or trouble, health or sickness, long life or  
 ‘ speedy death, just as thou knowest will be  
 ‘ most for thine honour and my eternal welfare.  
 ‘ I would have no choice, no will of my own;  
 ‘ but desire that thy will may be done in me,  
 ‘ and upon me, only let all work together for  
 ‘ my highest good, and most lasting happiness,  
 ‘ that when this world and all that is in it  
 ‘ shall be burnt up, I may, through thine infinite  
 ‘ mercy in Christ, have a place among  
 ‘ the redeemed of the Lord in thy kingdom  
 ‘ above.’

‘ In like manner, Lord, I resign my nearest  
 ‘ and dearest friends to thy blessed will, to be  
 ‘ rich or poor, to be healthy or afflicted, to  
 ‘ live

' live or die, as thou shalt see fit, only let all  
 ' thy various providences to them be sanctified  
 ' by thy grace and spirit to their souls good.  
 ' And with regard to this land, and this world  
 ' of which I am a native and an inhabitant, I  
 ' beg that thy whole will may be accomplished,  
 ' and only pray, in general, that thy blessed  
 ' Majesty may be glorified, and immortal souls  
 ' be saved.'

In a passive sense, this seems to be the general purport of these words—*Thy will be done.* And if we cannot utter them before the Lord with a sincere consent to this sense, though that consent may at times seem very feeble, I doubt much whether our hearts are right with God. It may be a proper exercise therefore, for each mind to examine itself seriously upon this important point, while I endeavour,

III. To shew you a few of the reasons, why we should cheerfully submit to the will of God in all things.

And first, God is infinite in wisdom, and cannot err : whereas, on the contrary, we are really ignorant of most things, and know  
 nothing

nothing perfectly. It becomes us therefore in point of duty, in point of modesty, and in point of safety, to give up ourselves entirely to him who is both able and willing to guide us and our affairs. Especially as,

In the next place, it must be acknowledged that this Guide is full of love. His goodness is equal to his wisdom, and therefore may confidently be relied on. "Good is the Lord  
 "and gracious, his compassion is infinite.  
 "He is good, and doth good, and therefore  
 "the children of men" should gladly "put  
 "their trust under the shadow of his wings."  
 To this it may be added, that if we do not resign ourselves to God our Father, we do not imitate Jesus Christ, whom we are bound, by every sacred tie, and whom we have repeatedly professed, to imitate. Here we are reduced to this dilemma, either we must resign ourselves in heart to the divine government in all things, or forfeit the honoured name of Christians. For Jesus Christ most implicitly referred himself to his heavenly Father's will, and in the clearest manner uttered these submissive expressions to him—" *Not my*  
 I " *will,*



“*will, but thine be done*\*.” “Now he hath left us an example, that we should walk in his steps†;” and let it ever be remembered, that *he* has put these words into our mouth—*Thy will be done*. They are found in his prayer, called “The Lord’s Prayer,” for the use of his disciples, and we have often made them our own, by repeating them; and therefore if our heart and life agree not and consent not to them, we renounce our relation to Christ, and contradict ourselves. Yea, whoever lives not as he prays, makes his life give his lips the lie; and I need not say what is likely to be the end of that man.

These are reasons for complying with the passive sense of the text, or arguments for entire resignation. But they will apply with equal force to the active sense, and speak as loudly for our doing, as bearing, or suffering, the will of God. Thus, for instance, God is wise, therefore his laws are founded on wisdom. God is holy, God is good, as well as wise; therefore his laws are *holy, just, and good*. The next, the natural, the unavoidable, consequence

\* Luke xxii. 42.

† 1 Peter ii. 21.

is, these laws ought to be most religiously obeyed by men.

Again. Jesus Christ hath set us the most illustrious example of active obedience, as well as of ready resignation. "He went about "doing good\*" to the bodies and souls of men. Wherever he was, he had one great object in view. Every day was, by him, filled up with active goodness, and all who are acquainted with the history of his life, must know, that it was "his meat and drink to do the will of "his heavenly Father." All, therefore, who presume to say to God, *Thy will be done*, must be careful to follow the example of Jesus, as circumstances will admit, if they would not be disowned by him at the last day.

It would be easy to multiply arguments upon this fruitful subject, if necessary. But I am willing to flatter myself that the dear people to whom I speak, are convinced of the duty, and need no more at present upon this head. I shall therefore endeavour now to make a short improvement of the subject.

\* Acts x. 38.

And I believe upon a review of our life, we must all see cause for deep humiliation and heart-felt sorrow before the Lord. Are you not sensible of having been defective in the great duties recommended in the text? Have you *done* and *suffered* the will of God with all that readiness and submission, with all that punctuality and fidelity, which God had a right to require, and which the words import? Yea, have you not often uttered the prayer itself, without considering its full and proper meaning? And have you not often said, *Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth*, without considering the greatness and glory of God in the heavens, and your own littleness and meanness—without designing to *hallow* God's holy *name*—without wishing his *kingdom* of grace and goodness to come into your own souls or the souls of others—and without intending to do or to bear the *will* of God, in that faithful, conscientious manner, that he requires of all his servants?

If this is the case, then be persuaded to cherish a godly sorrow for these past iniquities,  
and

and apply now to the mercy of God in Christ for pardon.

Finally. Learn from the whole, what need we have of divine grace to assist us in the performance of duties, if ever we perform them aright. Let us not trust to the powers of nature. Let us lead a life of humble dependence upon him who is mighty to save. “His  
“ grace is sufficient for us, and his strength is  
“ made perfect in weakness. He giveth power  
“ to the faint; and to them that have no  
“ might he increaseth strength. Even the  
“ youths, the warmest and strongest in their  
“ own apprehension, shall faint and be weary  
“ without him; and the young men, the in-  
“ experienced and forward, that trust to them-  
“ selves, shall utterly fall. But they that wait  
“ upon the LORD shall renew their strength:  
“ they shall mount up with wings as eagles,  
“ they shall run and not be weary, they shall  
“ walk and not faint\*.”

Let us then “work out our own salvation  
“with fear and trembling; yet with lively hope

\* See Isai. xl. latter part.



“ and sacred comfort : for it is GOD which  
 “ worketh in his people, both to will and to  
 “ do of his good pleasure\*.” Every day let  
 us earnestly pray for the blessed spirit of grace  
 and truth, to teach and sanctify us, that we  
 may grow up into a holy meetness for the em-  
 ployments and pleasures of the heavenly world.  
 And in this course, let us not doubt but we  
 shall have sweet consolation, through Jesus  
 Christ. For the God of mercy hath ordained,  
 that “ the work of righteousness shall be peace;  
 “ and the effect of righteousness, quietness and  
 “ assurance for ever†.”

\* Phil. ii. 12, 13.

† Isai. xxxii. 17.

LECTURE VI.

MATTHEW vi. 10.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN  
HEAVEN.

**E**XTENSIVE request! Vast and important in its signification! May we all understand and feel it! Lord, do thou enlighten our minds, that we may perceive what is contained in these few words. Too long, alas! have we been ignorant of their sacred import, and too much have we neglected the duties they enjoin. "It is of thy mercies, Lord, that we are not consumed." Help us now, we beseech thee, to attend properly to the things that belong to our peace, and do thou command thy blessing upon thy word, and shed abroad thy love upon our souls, through Jesus Christ, *Amen.*

In discoursing from the text, I shall shew

I. What is *not* meant by doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.

II. Endeavour to shew what *is* meant by this expression.

The first part will be short, and, perhaps, to some unnecessary and unimproving, though to others it may be useful. It may possibly occur as a difficulty to some minds, that ‘the  
‘angels in glory are perfect beings, unclogged  
‘with sinful bodies, untried with distress, and  
‘never assaulted by any temptation.’ And we learn also from scripture, that ‘*the spirits of just*  
‘*men* departed this life, are *made perfect* in  
‘heaven : and if, therefore, we are required to  
‘do the will of God *as it is done in heaven*,  
‘are we not required to do that which it is  
‘impossible we should do?’

If the above difficulty were started by way of cavil, we should be apt to treat it with pious displeasure rather than heart-felt seriousness. But when it takes its origin from involuntary  
ignorance

ignorance, and is proposed with humble desires of information, it is then undoubtedly, entitled to a fair discussion, and a serious answer. In this view I would be understood to enter upon the first thing proposed; which is, to shew what is *not* meant by God's will being *done in earth, as it is in heaven*. And

I begin with observing, that this expression does not suppose men capable of doing the divine will as it is done by pure and perfect spirits in glory. He that dictated this petition "knew what was in man. He knoweth "our frame and remembereth that we are "dust;" and has given us to understand, that not in the present state, but a future, even at the resurrection of the just, his faithful disciples shall be "as the angels of God in heaven\*."

Our text, therefore does not require, or imply, absolute perfection in our duties, in this imperfect state. It leaves sufficient room for the honest plea of human infirmity. It will stoop to a just consideration of our numerous difficulties. It overlooks not our various and

\* Matt. xxii. 30.



powerful temptations, but in all things “judgeth  
 “righteous judgment” between God and man;  
 so that it affords, when rightly understood, all  
 proper satisfaction to the doubting, and all  
 necessary consolation to the fainting, on the  
 one hand; while, on the other, it breaks the  
 feeble pretences of religious indolence, and  
 will pour everlasting confusion upon them who  
 shall hereafter attempt to excuse themselves  
 from active duty, by saying—“ Lord, I knew  
 “ thee that thou art an hard man, reaping  
 “ where thou hast not sown, and gathering  
 “ where thou hast not sowed; and I was  
 “ afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the  
 “ earth\*.”

It appears then, that there is nothing in our  
 text which can beget a reasonable doubt or  
 scruple in the bosom of any man. Nothing  
 can there be found in it to support the shadow  
 of a solid objection. Here is nothing to shock  
 our pious attempts. Nothing to intimidate  
 serious endeavour. Nothing to shut the door  
 against the hope of success. If we say, that  
 a great duty is here required, we say the truth.

\* Matt. xxv. 24, &c.

But

But that this duty is of the same nature, and of a piece with many others, is equally true. This indeed is comprehensive, and includes many duties in one. But this very circumstance proves, that there is nothing extraordinary for *kind*, but only in *degree*.

If it be said, ‘ this duty surpasses the powers ‘ of nature ;’ the same may be asserted with equal truth of almost all other duties, when considered in their full extent. And the proper, the scriptural inference is, that we must not rely on *nature*, but on *grace*, for the performance of *any* duty. What the apostle Paul said of himself, may be said by every good person upon the earth—“ It is by the grace “ of God that I am what I am\*.”

And though we should abhor the extreme wickedness of drawing in this principle as an excuse for indifference in religion and carelessness of life ; yet while we “ work out our own “ salvation with fear and trembling,” we must confess “ it is God that worketh in us both to “ will and to do†.”

\* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Further.

Further. I shall just take notice, that the expression in the text, when carefully considered, will serve as a guide to the sense.—Reasoning from analogy may, in general, be proper, and in some cases perhaps it may be necessary. But after stating the probable sense of a passage by this mode, if any thing can be found in the passage itself which tends to elucidate its own meaning, and that agrees with the probabilities before stated, we may, in this case, conclude with some little degree of confidence, that we have fallen into no great mistake.

The words in our text are, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*. Now this, so far as it belongs to the active duty of mortals, is not to be understood, I apprehend, of degree, so much as of manner. The words, therefore, may be considered by every one that repeats them, in this sense—*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*; that is, in like manner as it is done in heaven, though it cannot be in equal degree. In support of this, I shall quote to you the memorable words of our blessed Lord to his disciples, in the last verse of the fifth

fifth chapter of Matthew. Having been instructing them in various duties, particularly those of love and forgiveness, he concludes his subject thus—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Common sense forbids our supposing that mortal men can be as perfect, literally, as the infinite God; and, consequently, some softer, some inferior sense, must be given to the words.

I have dwelt longer on this part than I at first intended; and while I fear I have said too much for the satisfaction of well informed minds, I hope I have said full enough for the instruction of those who are professedly ignorant. I therefore haste immediately to the discussion of my second head, under which I shall attempt to shew the *positive* meaning of the text.

And in this view I apprehend is meant, that all who repeat this prayer, are to desire that they may be enabled to love the Lord's service, in their measure, as the angels do: and that they may have a will to perform it as readily,  
in



in their measure, as the holy angels perform the duties required of them. I say, in their measure, because, if we would offer to our God a *reasonable service*, we must always keep up in our mind a sense of the superiority of all heavenly beings over earthly; and though we ought to desire to be *like* them, yet it would be too much to hope, in the present state, to *equal* them. And this may be admirably illustrated by the experience of every *real Christian*. Every *such* person *wishes* to be entirely delivered from sin. He would not have the least part of it remain in his nature. He would never more have one sinful thought; much less speak a sinful word, or do an evil action. He would love God, and serve God, and enjoy God, in equal degree with the angels in heaven. This he wishes, you will observe; but to this, you must know, he doth not attain. And the language of St. Paul in the same case, must always be his language, while in the body—"Not as though I had "already attained, either were already perfect."

By the petition in the text, we have reason to believe is also meant, that all who utter it  
before

before the Lord, should sincerely wish that not only themselves, but others likewise, may have a will to do that which God requires of them, as freely, according to their capacity, and making all due allowances for the difference of ability and situation, as the angels in heaven.

Every good man wishes others good. This is according to the principles of the new nature which he hath received. Being “born of God\*,” he “favours the things of God ;” just as every man that is governed by worldly and sensual motives, “ favours the things of “men†.” Now upon this principle the text proceeds. The prayer, of which that is a part, is designed for sincere Christians ; for pure and upright souls. And it is supposed, that every such soul will most unfeignedly wish others in the same safe state. And therefore each is instructed to pray for the accomplishment of so desirable an end. The result of all which is, that every one who offers this prayer to God, should from his heart wish that a general reformation may take place among

\* 1 John i. 13.

† Matt. xvi. 23.

men,

men, and at least *desire* that the world might attain to such an enlightened and such a renewed state, that there may not be one disobedient soul upon the earth ; but that “ all “ men may come to the knowledge of the truth “ and be saved.” Hence we may learn

That another thing meant by the text is, that we should labour, *every one according to his several ability*, according to his measure of influence in the situation in which providence has placed him, to effect *that* for which he daily prays. This prayer would teach every one that utters it, would he but seriously attend to its dictates, to use his best endeavours to promote general holiness, righteousness, goodness, faith, meekness, patience, love, and every other christian grace and moral virtue. It instructs us, that we are to extend our thoughts beyond ourselves, though we must look to ourselves first. We are to feel tenderly for our dear friends and relatives. That they have immortal souls which must be happy or miserable for ever, is a truth that should never forsake our bosoms. It should make a deep impression upon our hearts at all times. It is  
a solemn

a solemn truth that should rise nobly superior to every other consideration. This momentous reflection should have its proper influence upon our thoughts, words, and actions.

When we see our neighbours, we should view them not merely as creatures of earth, who have a part to act upon the great theatre of the world, and are quickly to retire behind the scene, and be seen no more. We should view them not merely as rich or poor, honoured or reproached, learned or unlearned, beautiful or deformed, amiable or unpleasant, friendly or unkind, aiding to our comfort, or rivals for our much-loved fame; but we ought to consider them as immortal beings, and view them in the light of an approaching and a tremendous eternity, in which we and they shall speedily be swallowed up. When we think of mankind at large, thousands of thousands and millions of millions of whom we have never seen, and in the body never shall see, it becomes us to think of them with a *brother's* feeling and a *christian* soul.— Love, tenderness, compassion and universal good will should be the soft language of the

K heart.



heart. And when we approach a Throne of Grace to supplicate favour for ourselves, we should bear a World of rational creatures upon our devout and humble minds.

We are to have a high regard for the divine honour, and wish it may be promoted among all men, by all men's knowing and doing the will of our Father which is in heaven. It must never be matter of indifference to us, whether the God of all perfections, the God of all mercies, and the God of all our comforts, be honoured or dishonoured upon the earth. This lesson of useful instruction is eminently held forth to us in the text. If we overlook this, as we shall pray without understanding, so we are likely to pray without profit. A man that prays intelligently, when he says, Father, *thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*, doth in reality say, ' Lord, I know that thy will ' is wisdom and thy law is love, and I ' am sincerely concerned that both may be ' conscientiously obeyed by men. Lord, I ' wish to cherish a tender sense of the honour ' due to thee, and am grieved when I see it ' disregarded. I wish all men to pay that ' attention

‘attention to it they ought, that they may  
 ‘glorify thy name by a fuitable conduct here,  
 ‘and be happy in thy prefence hereafter.’

Another thing meant by the text is, that all who utter it fhould fincerely wifh that the providential will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Or rather let me fay, that the petition of which our text is compofed, is defigned to teach us, that it is the duty of all men, univerfally, to wifh Almighty God to do by all nations, all focieties, all families, and all individuals, as feemeth good in his fight. This fenfe of the words proceeds from this principle, that God, as a perfect being, can do nothing but what is *right* to be done. And that, what he does will be beft upon the whole, whatever appearances it may affume to mortal eyes, upon an imperfect view, or a partial representation. Indeed, all the views that man can take of divine, or if I may fo fpeak, of infinite, proceedings, muft be partial, and, of courfe, imperfect; and therefore it becomes us fully and without referve to intruft all human affairs with that Being, in whom are combined perfect wifdom and perfect goodnefs, with every other poffible excellence.

Our highest wisdom is seen in a free confession of our ignorance, and in a ready acknowledgment of incapacity to choose for ourselves or our friends. Our sense of the divine rectitude and infallibility is best shewn, by our sincere and earnest request to God, that he would order every thing for all men according to the counsel of his own will. And never are our souls in so good a frame, as when they cordially unite in the ardent desire of angels, that God will do according to his will in the army of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth.

It may be said, 'The Will of the Supreme Being *will* be done, whether we wish it or no.' This is true. But why will it be done? Because it is for the general happiness of the universe. This, however, is so far from rendering the duty in question unnecessary, that it is really the foundation upon which it was at first raised, and now stands. Because it is right, and must be done, therefore we must pray for it. Or, to express it in different words, we must pray for it, that we may pray for *that* which is right, and proper to be done. And this is the rule of  
our

duty. Ought we not to pray for that which is in itself right and good? Should we not gladly pray for what God himself wills, and intends to perform? It is true, the Lord will not ask his creature's permission. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him! "None can say unto him," by way of opposition, "what dost thou? or why dost thou so?" But in great goodness he is willing to set his creatures right, and would have them readily consent to what he does. Yea, may I not say, he would have his children be of the same mind with himself, and delight to ask what he delights to give—what he delights to perform?

Here then is a trial of duty. It does not depend upon thy will, O man, nor upon thy prayers, whether the perfect will of God shall be done, or not. But *thy happiness* depends upon thy being, or *not* being, willingly submissive, cheerfully obedient, and perseveringly good. An Absolute Prince, great and good, does not ask his subjects whether or no he shall make a just and wholesome law; but he is, doubtless, willing that they should be pleased with it when it is made, and that all



should wish its proper effect, and unite in its observance. All that do so, must be supposed to reap the advantage of it; and all that do not, must take the consequences, and expect to suffer the penalty which the law inflicts.

I shall conclude this head with observing, that as the angels in glory, from a complete conviction of the divine perfections, desire that the divine will should be done in all things in that heaven where they dwell in perpetual peace and bliss; so should we, from that conviction of the same truth afforded us in the sacred volume, most seriously and solemnly desire that the will of God may be done in all things on this earth where we exist.

I proceed now to shew more particularly, what it is to do the will of our heavenly Father as it is done by his holy angels. And first, it is to do it intelligently, or in knowledge. The angels are furnished with wisdom to understand their Maker's will. And we are also blessed with the means of knowledge, by being favoured with the Holy Scriptures, which are filled with the wisdom that descendeth from above. I do not pretend to say, that it is  
always

always necessary, for sometimes it may not be possible, for men to understand the design, or to discover the reasons, of a duty. The angels themselves may not attain to this. They may be sent on embassies to distant worlds, the depth or design of which they may be unable to discover\*. But this is no matter to them, as they are always satisfied of one general truth, which is, that whatever God doth, in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in any other part of his immense dominions, it is well and wisely done; and therefore they need only to know, that what they do, is a duty in them. And this I apprehend is always the case.

And this likewise should be the case, as much as possible, with us. We should labour to be certain that what we do, is a duty in us, at the time of our doing it. Nor is this all: but as we are to know in the first place that any particular thing is a duty, so must we be concerned to perform it in an understanding manner. Known duties performed at random, reflect a disgrace on the performer. We

\* See Heb. i. 14. and 1 Pet. i. 12. latter clause.

should be careful that none of our devotions, and that none of our services of any kind, appear with this, or a similar inscription on them, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD\*."

Further. To do the will of our Father which is in heaven, as it is done by his holy angels, is to do it purely, *as* the will of God. It is to have our consciences say to us in secret, this and this is done, because, and *only* because, God commands it. This leads me to remark

- That to do the divine will as the holy angels, is to do it absolutely to the divine glory. In heaven every thing bends to the honour and glory of God. This is the motive that moves every tongue, that tunes every harp, that sweetens every song, that bows every knee, and that accelerates every duty. In heaven there is but one will; that is, God's. In heaven one end is invariably pursued; that is, the divine honour. There is not a creature in heaven that seeks to draw a private glory to itself; but the glory and happiness of each is, to give glory to the Creator.

\* See A&S xvii. 23.

O that

O that this were more the case on earth !  
 Alas ! who is there among us, that is not, in  
 some way or other, seeking his own glory, to  
 the dishonour of God, and of his holy religion ?  
 If we would be like the angels now, if we  
 would imitate them below, and shine with  
 them above, we must sincerely, and from the  
 bottom of our hearts, perform all our duties to  
 the glory of God. We cannot be too careful  
 in this particular ; for if we do not deeply  
 examine our hearts, and narrowly watch over  
 them, they will surely deceive us. And in  
 no one thing, perhaps, are they so likely to  
 impose upon us, as in this. It is necessary  
 therefore to ask ourselves, why we do some  
 things ; and why we leave others undone. It  
 is proper for a Minister to ask himself, for  
 instance, what are his motives for preaching,  
 and performing other public duties ; and if  
 they are not performed purely with a view to  
 the glory of God, they will be so far from  
 doing him future good, that they will come  
 in as articles of his condemnation. In this  
 manner should Hearers also examine into their  
 motives for hearing ; and indeed in this way  
 should we examine or try all the actions of  
 our



our life ; and if they are, any of them, condemned by this rule, we may depend upon it, they will not stand the test of a future judgment. This is a solemn consideration, and I wish it may have its due weight with us, that we may all be induced to comply with the apostle's exhortation, that " whether we eat " or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all " to the glory of God."

Again. To do the will of God as it is done in heaven, is to do it *readily*. The holy angels fly with ardor and with speed, to execute the high commands they receive. And if we would do our heavenly Father's will as it is done by them, we must neither murmur, nor hesitate ; but instantly perform what we know to be instantly required. Faithful Abraham was an illustrious example of this ready obedience in two particulars. The first was, his readily leaving his Father's house and native country, in obedience to the divine command, and going into a strange land, " not " knowing whither he went," but intrusting himself entirely with God.

The

The second and more remarkable instance was, his offering up his son Isaac, and his readiness in handling the sacrificing knife, when a faithful and unerring God required it. Let *us* shew ourselves *the children of faithful Abraham*, by imitating his example of ready obedience in *known duties*, and especially in *hard and difficult* duties. This would lead me to say, that if we would obey according to the text, we should obey with *pleasure*, for in this way is the will of God done in heaven. All heaven is full of pleasure, as it is full of purity.

But this, with many other things, I must forbear to enlarge on, and remark from the whole, First, that great grace is necessary to the character of a Christian. Without divine grace and assistance we never shall rightly do the will of our Father which is in heaven ; and without doing this, we must never expect to enter heaven. Let us therefore

Secondly, Give ourselves to prayer. Let us be much in prayer, and stedfastly believe that God will grant us his holy spirit to help our infirmities ; and above all to sanctify our hearts,  
and

and make them holy ; for without this, we never can delight to do the pure will of God, and, of course, never shall be happy.

Thirdly, While we look to the blood of Jesus, and to the mercy of God in Christ, for the pardon of all our sins, both of omission and commission, let us also look to the holy *example* of Jesus for our future conduct ; and desire to be as much like him as possible ; for if we are like him in this world, we shall surely join his holy angels in the next. Consider therefore

Lastly, What joys await all the faithful servants of the Lord, beyond the grave. Joys that are unspeakable, as they must, in this world, be ever unknown. But let us be encouraged, in all our sufferings and difficulties, by this reflection, that in our heavenly Father's presence there is a "fulness of joy," and at his right hand "are pleasures for evermore." Which that we may obtain, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

LECTURE VII.

MATTHEW VI. 11.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

**M**ODERATION in all their desires and in all their pursuits, is highly becoming the children of men. No where is this moderation so effectually taught, as in the holy scriptures. The Son of God himself has condescended to become our teacher, that we may learn from the best authority, and not be misled by the blind and ignorant.

He has assured us, that we ought not, that we need not, be anxious. He hath commanded us to take no thought, that is, no distracting thought, for the morrow. Again and again has he inculcated this divine lesson, that we must not set our hearts upon the good things of this world, nor suffer our desires after them  
to



to gain the ascendancy in our souls. Daily bread is daily provision ; and this he has taught us to ask ; and beyond this, may I not say, he allows not his disciples to indulge a fond desire.

In discoursing from the text, I purpose to take the following method. I will endeavour, in the first place, to shew what the words fairly imply and naturally suggest. And, secondly, I will state some scriptural reasons, why we should not be anxiously concerned about this world's goods, nor desire a large portion of them.

In the first place, I am to shew what is fairly implied and naturally suggested by the text. And I begin with observing, that here is implied great dependence, on the side of man. This idea indeed is rather loudly proclaimed than silently implied. For what we ask from another, it is to be supposed, in general, we understand to be in the power and at the will of that other. And if we ask daily bread from God, we do, in effect say, that we cannot have that bread if he is pleased to deny it us.

Behold !

Behold ! then my dear hearers, your dependence on the God of heaven and earth.— Whenever you utter the petition now under consideration, you tell the Almighty that you cannot live in this world without him. That you cannot supply the returning wants of your frail bodies, unless he is pleased to favour your designs and prosper your undertakings.

This shall be more particularly explained. Some who have large possessions and great riches, or who enjoy the common means of getting rich, may not easily subscribe to this truth. The husbandman may be ready to say, ‘ My success depends upon my industry :’ the mechanick may flatter himself that his depends upon the same ; and the merchant may suppose that his success depends first upon his own sagacity, next upon times and opportunities, and then upon the care and fidelity of those whom he employs. And to close the whole, the man of large estate says, that his living depends on no contingency, and is subject to no disappointment, for he has it in his own hand, and under his own eye ; and moreover he adds, it is of such a nature that it cannot be lost.

Our

Our text, however, gives us to understand, that whatever are our circumstances or situations in life, we are all dependent for bread on that God "who giveth us richly all things "to enjoy." The man of wisdom and the man of toil must learn, that "the race is not always "to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, "neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches "to men of understanding, nor yet favour to "men of skill;" but that after our best endeavours, it still remains with the great Sovereign of the Universe, whether or no we shall have food to eat and raiment to put on. A storm may overtake the richly laden ship, and in a moment bury the merchant's hopes in the depths of the sea. A sudden turn of providence, unforeseen and unsuspected by the mechanick, may blast all his pleasing prospects and take from him every joy of earth. The farmer may reap his flowing crop, and put it with the greatest care into store-houses and barns. But the destructive flame may soon kindle upon his habitation, extend itself to barns, to store-houses, and to all the valuable things he lately called his own, and in one short hour reduce him to the utmost distress. A convulsion of nature which, because but seldom experienced

experienced, is but little feared, might nevertheless happen, and the largest and fairest estate might be swallowed up in an instant, and leave its once-rich possessor in a state of complete indigence and temporal ruin.

But without having recourse to any of these calamities, the great God of nature can quickly bring the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, the industrious and the indolent, upon a level in misery. He can take from them all "the staff of bread," by an affliction, the very name of which makes human nature shudder. Multitudes of our race have been driven to distresses, which, in tenderness to your feelings, perhaps I had better not mention, and have at last died by the unrelenting hand of famine. It is sufficient to add, under this particular, that all the works of God, in all places of his dominion, are perfectly subject to his will. If he command them to suspend, or withhold, their influences, they immediately obey. If he but speak the word, the windows of heaven shall be opened, and incessant floods of rain shall drown our crops in their infancy; or, on the contrary,

L he



he can seal up the clouds, those bottles of heaven, and deny us both "the early and the latter rain;" and, either way, effectually defeat the husbandman's toils and hopes, till he make an utter end of us.

From this part of our subject, three important duties are suggested. The first is, that we ought to be extremely humble. We see here what poor dependent creatures we are; and how can we, after this, presume to be proud? How exceedingly unbecoming are all high imaginations, proud looks, vaunting expressions, and haughty actions, in such helpless mortals? Let us then, from this hour, be "clothed with humility\*.

The second duty arising from hence, is gratitude. A duty pleasing to God and comfortable to man. Creatures that live wholly on bounty, or if I may so express it, on charity, should not be unthankful. And thus we all do. We all live on charity: and we all acknowledge it before God, when we say unto him, *give us this day our daily bread.* And

\* 1 Pet. v. 5.

let

let us not, my brethren, be unmindful of, nor inattentive to, the hand that feeds us. Let our heavenly Benefactor have the praises of our hearts and lives, for the third duty that springs from our dependence and God's goodness,

Is that of sincere and willing obedience. If we are not willingly obedient, we have no just reason to expect the divine blessing, but every reason to fear his curse. And have not we, as a nation, some thing to apprehend in this view? I really suspect that we have. For whatever we are distinguished by, as a kingdom, I believe it is apparent to discerning and spiritually-minded persons, that we are not distinguished by the practice of true godliness. And if we are disobedient to the divine command, God in his word does not encourage us to expect his favour.

Upon this occasion I shall quote to you a part of the threatenings denounced against the Israelites, in case of disobedience. "It shall come to pass," says the sacred word, "if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the

“ Lord thy God, to observe to do all his  
 “ commandments and his statutes, which I  
 “ command thee this day, that all these curses  
 “ shall come upon thee, and overtake thee\*.”

Here is a long catalogue of curses mentioned, and among the rest, the following—“ The  
 “ Lord shall send upon thee, cursing, vexation,  
 “ and rebuke, in all thou settest thine hand  
 “ unto for to do, until thou be destroyed.  
 “ The Lord shall smite thee with a fever, and  
 “ with extreme burning, and with the sword,  
 “ and with blasting, and with mildew; and  
 “ they shall pursue thee until thou perish.  
 “ And the heaven that is over thy head shall  
 “ be brass, and the earth that is under thee  
 “ shall be iron. The Lord shall make the  
 “ rain of thy land powder and dust; from  
 “ heaven it shall come upon thee until thou  
 “ be destroyed.”

This passage shews us how entirely nature, in all its parts and operations, is at the will and command of God, and preaches in the loudest manner our dependence upon him,

\* Deut. xxviii

and

and the absolute necessity of obedience unto him, if we would not be miserable. Let us then be prevailed on, every one of us, to give ourselves up to the service of the Lord, whose we are, and whom, for so many and such weighty reasons, we are bound to love and obey. Let us pray for the Lord's spirit to help us to do this in sincerity and truth.

The text further implies, that we should be content with plain things. I am sensible that the word, *bread*, in scripture, is often of a very extensive signification. And I am free to allow, that in this place it is not to be confined to bread, literally so called: but may be understood to comprehend the food of man, in general. But from the character of the author, and his own express precepts, and from his manner of life, we have just cause to believe our text implies, that Christians are to be satisfied with plain things.

They are not to make a God of their belly. They are not to study fancy in their diet, but to be guided by reason and religion. Simple nature, and not evil custom, is to be consulted



by them. If they have something to supply their returning wants, to strengthen their bodies, to preserve health, and to prepare them for their various duties, they have abundant reason to be satisfied. This leads me to remark

That the text implies we should be pleased with little. We are not instructed to pray for an *estate*, but for *bread*. Not for an abundance of temporal good things at a time; not for goods to lay up for many years; but for *daily* bread: for bread day by day; enough for each day when it comes. If we have a sufficiency for this day, it is very well. The morrow will take care for the things of itself. Leave that to God, only take care that you are found in the path of duty; walking in the straight line which Providence hath marked out for you, not turning aside, either to the right hand or the left. Having therefore moderate “food and raiment, let us be there-  
“with content; for we walk by faith, and  
“not by sight.”

The text suggests to us further, that we are to be *constant* in the duty of *prayer*. If I  
pray

pray to God to give me *this* day my daily bread, I ought to ask the same blessing again to-morrow (if I live) either in the same, or in other, words; for bread will be as necessary to-morrow as it is to-day. So, every new day is a new trial, and we must renew our conflict with temptations and dangers. We should therefore make our earnest prayer to God for fresh degrees of strength and renewed grace, that we may be enabled to withstand the adversaries of our souls, and press forward through all difficulties, in the narrow path that leads to glory. The very circumstance of our being taught to ask for *daily bread*, seems to intimate that we should ask daily supplies of grace for our souls, since *these* are as necessary to *eternal* life, as the former is to the preservation of *bodily* life.

It is further suggested by our text, that we should all be careful to seek the divine blessing upon our food. If we ask simply for bread, or for something to satisfy the cravings of nature, and are not at all solicitous that it may be sanctified to us, we look no further than the brute creation, that know not their God.—

“The young ravens cry for food, and the  
 “Lord heareth them,” and satisfieth their  
 desires. But man ought to look beyond this,  
 and consider, that he is “not to live by bread  
 “alone, but by every word that proceedeth  
 “out of the mouth of God\*.” It becomes  
 him to reflect, that all his enjoyments, are but  
 the enjoyments of an animal, unless his soul  
 rise in grateful acknowledgments to the giver,  
 and his heavenly benefactor shower down upon  
 him the richer blessings of his paternal love.

Here I must take notice of the ancient  
 and pious custom of asking a blessing upon  
 food, before it is received. This part of  
 religion is usually called ‘Saying grace :’  
 and I think it argues a sad want of grace to  
*omit* it, as is the custom of too many. And  
 there is also a method of performing it, which,  
 perhaps, is as bad, or worse, than the total  
 neglect of it. I here speak of the hurri-  
 done, careless, and manifestly indevout manner  
 in which some pretend to crave a blessing  
 upon their meals ; dispatching it so very  
 quickly, that by the time the company have

\* Mat. iv. 4.

caught

caught a word or two, all is over ; for the little that is said, is uttered with such a low voice, and in such an indistinct tone, that it is difficult for any person, beside the speaker, to know what is spoken ; and the speaker himself too frequently indicates by his whole manner, that he is almost ashamed of the duty.

Here I shall just remark, that before our great Redeemer ate bread, or distributed to his disciples, he paid a sacred regard to the duty now under consideration. He first *blest*, and then *broke*, the bread\*. In imitation of him, the great apostle of the Gentiles, when on his voyage to Rome, as a prisoner for the cause of religion, after the vessel in which he sailed had been in danger of shipwreck, upon which occasion he and they that were with him fasted four days, he, being comforted with an assurance that they should not perish, exhorted his companions “to take some meat.” “And he took bread, *and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all*, and “when he had broken it, he began to eat†.”

\* Mat. xiv. 19.

† Acts xxvii. 35.

This



This same apostle tells us, that God hath created meats to “ be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For,” adds he, “ it,” that is, the *meat* which is received by Christians, “ is sanctified “ by the word of God, and prayer\*.”

Thus having shewn, in some humble measure, what is implied and suggested by the text, I shall now, in the second place, attempt to state some reasons why we ought not to be anxiously concerned about this world's goods, nor desire a large portion of them.

The first reason I shall mention, is our great unworthiness. What is it that we deserve at the hand of God? Is there any one among us who will venture to say, that he hath deserved well of God? I presume not. If he were, his own mouth would condemn him. His very prayers would rise in judgment against him. For how often have we all confessed, that we are finners; that we have merited, not rewards, but punishments; and acknowledged,

\* 1 Tim. iv. 5, 4.

that

that "it is of the Lord's mercies we were not  
 "long ago consumed." "O God the Father  
 'of heaven, have mercy upon us, *miserable*  
 'sinners,' is also language well known to  
 multitudes.

And can any of us after this, pretend to have  
 a *right* to the good things of life? Rather,  
 must we not all confess, that we deserve for  
 our sins to be "fed with the bread of affliction,  
 "and with the water of affliction," as long as  
 we remain below? Yea, and will not the  
 truly convinced sinner say, that he is willing  
 the Lord shall do by him just as he pleases  
 here, if he will in infinite mercy save his soul  
 hereafter? That if He sees it good, he shall  
 send him poverty, affliction, and sorrow, upon  
 the earth, if he will not send his guilty soul  
 to hell? Is not this the language of deep  
 conviction and of sincere repentance? Who  
 then that has the least pretension to the  
 knowledge of himself, as a sinner, and of his  
 deserts as a transgressor of the divine law, can  
 venture to think that he deserves much of the  
 good things of this life? And if men are  
 conscious that they do not deserve much,  
 is

is it not highly unjust and presuming to covet it? Let then a sense of our unworthiness in the sight of God make us content with a little, and ashamed to be anxiously desirous of more.

Next I name the shortness and uncertainty of human life, as a reason why we should by no means be anxious about this world's goods, nor ever suffer ourselves to be betrayed into a longing desire after riches. It is the unhappiness of many to be fond of wealth; and they spend their days in painful search of it. By a thousand needless anxieties they deprive themselves of the proper comfort of existence; and by repeated apprehensions, alarms, and cares, render a life naturally short still more short than it otherwise would be.

The time of our continuance here, is indeed, uncertain to all. The length, however, of the longest period allotted to man upon the earth, is not great. And by what is constantly happening before our eyes, we see how little reason we have to be fond of the world in which we live. Alas! how soon,

soon, and often how suddenly, are those who appear to have the fairest title to long life and temporal enjoyments, taken from us ! Only to contemplate the deaths which have happened around us, and within our knowledge, for the space of ten years, seems sufficient (till we advert to the depravity of human nature) to deaden our affections to things below, to set our hearts upon our everlasting home, and to make us content with very little by the way.

The religion which we profess, exhorts us also to look upon ourselves as “strangers” and pilgrims” upon the earth. As mere passengers, who “have here no continuing city,” but should be unremittingly “seeking one to come.”

In agreement with this, we are instructed in our text to pray unto our Heavenly Father to give us *this* day our daily bread ; without saying any thing about the morrow. Hence, let us learn to look upon ourselves as creatures of a day; creatures who are at a perfect uncertainty as to the morrow, and who ought not to be imprudently loading themselves with  
cares



cares which refer to time that they may never see.

Further. *As the followers of Christ*, it is highly unbecoming to desire a large portion of this world's goods. To have our minds set upon the fading glories, or perishing riches of this life, would be awfully departing from the example of our Lord—and not only from his example, but from his precepts also.—The love of shew, or what the scriptures call, *the pride of life*, manifested in various degrees by all ranks of people—the not being content with what is barely sufficient for the real demands of nature, has much injured, I apprehend, the unassuming religion of the humble Jesus in the eyes of the world, and produced ten thousand, thousand murmurs which ought never to have been uttered.

“ Brethren, ye know the grace of our Lord  
 “ Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet  
 “ for our sakes he became poor, that we  
 “ through his poverty,” or abasement, “ might  
 “ become spiritually rich\*.” Think, Christians,

\* 2 Cor. viii. 9, &c.

on the condition of Christ, when on the earth ; and be often revolving in your minds, these words of his—" The foxes have holes, and " the birds of the air have nests ; but the son " of man hath not where to lay his head\*!"

Well therefore might his apostle say, after Jesus rose from the grave, and ascended to his Father—" If ye then be risen with Christ," risen in heart and affection, as your holy profession requires—" seek those things which " are above, where Christ sitteth on the right- " hand of God. Set your affection on things " above, not on things on the earth." It would be unreasonable in them who profess relationship to Christ, and who hope to reign with him hereafter, not to be satisfied with *daily bread*, while they are on their road to a kingdom ; and to set their hearts upon any thing short of that kingdom, would pronounce them utterly unfit for it.

Another reason why we should not be anxiously careful for the things of this life, arises from the good Providence of God. The

\* Mat. viii. 20.

Lord's mercies are over all his works. His kindness is visible in the populous city, in the lonely village, in the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea.

This is our Lord's argument. "Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?" "And why take ye thought," or anxious thought, "for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith. Therefore take no thought," or no distressing thought, "saying, what shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ? or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) and your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom  
" of

“ of God, and his righteousness ; and all these  
“ things shall be added unto you\*.”

Lastly. We ought not to be immoderately concerned about the things of this mortal life, because the immoderate care, as well as the disposition from whence it sprang, would endanger our salvation. No man can serve such contrary masters as God and the world. Our blessed Lord knew this perfectly well, and in this view he has evidently consulted our best interest, in encouraging us to ask only *daily bread*, and to be satisfied with, and thankful for, what is necessary to our subsistence. To this sentiment all the scriptures give witness.

Remarkable to this purpose are the words of St. Paul to Timothy. “ Godliness with  
“ contentment is great gain. For we brought  
“ nothing into this world, and it is certain  
“ we can carry nothing out. And having  
“ food and raiment, let us be therewith content.  
“ tent.

\* Mat. vi.

M

“ But



“ But they that *will* be rich, fall into temp-  
 “ tation, and a snare, and into many foolish  
 “ and hurtful lusts, which drown men in  
 “ destruction and perdition. For the love of  
 “ money is the root of all evil ; which, while  
 “ some coveted after, they have erred from the  
 “ faith, and pierced themselves through with  
 “ many sorrows.

“ But thou, O man of God,” adds the  
 apostle, “ flee these things : and follow after  
 “ righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience,  
 “ meekness. Fight the good fight of faith—  
 “ lay hold on eternal life\*.”

Christ gives us to understand, that the im-  
 moderate cares of this life, are *thorns*, which  
 will not only prevent the growth of, but even  
 destroy, the *good seed* of the divine word.—  
 “ He that received seed among the thorns, is  
 “ he that heareth the word : and the care of  
 “ this world, and the deceitfulness of riches,  
 “ choke the word, and he becometh unfruit-  
 “ ful†.” And to finish this point, I shall cite

\* 1 Tim. vi.

† Mat. xiii. 22.

the solemn words of our great Redeemer, in another place. “ Take heed, to yourselves, “ lest at any time your hearts be overcharged “ with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the “ cares of this life, and so that day,” that solemn ‘ day for which all other days were ‘ made,’ “ come upon you unawares. For as a “ snare shall it come on all them that dwell “ on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye “ therefore—and pray always\*.”

In the conclusion I must observe, First, that our subject by no means sets aside the necessity of industry. It is the duty of all men to be honestly employed—and the apostle’s rule in the case is, “ If any will not work, neither “ should he eat†.” We are therefore to be industrious, but not anxious. We must work to God’s honour, and with daily prayer look to him for daily blessings.

Secondly. We must abhor the gain of falsehood and oppression. A person who lives in the practice of these, or similar vices, must

\* Luke xxi. towards the close. † 2 Theff. iii. 10.

never venture to approach God's footstool, to ask the divine blessing on his accursed deeds ; and he will appear at the bar of God hereafter, only to be judged, condemned, and sentenced to eternal misery.

Thirdly. As we live upon bounty, we must not *abuse* that bounty. We must waste nothing, but use every thing as will be best pleasing to God. The rich must supply the wants of the poor out of their abundance. And all should remember that they must give an account. Here the words of St. Paul, respecting the wealthy, will not, I hope, be thought unseasonable. “ Charge them that  
 “ are rich in this world, that they be not  
 “ high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches,  
 “ but in the living God, who giveth us richly  
 “ all things to enjoy : That they do good, that  
 “ they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in  
 “ store for themselves a good foundation against  
 “ the time to come, that they may lay hold on  
 “ eternal life\*.”

\* 1 Tim. vi. 17, &c.

Finally,

Finally. Let none of us be satisfied with any thing short of Christ, "the bread of life\*." Whatever else we miss, let us lay "hold on this hope set before us†" in the gospel. May the Lord help us to believe, to love, and to live, like Christians here, that we may all surround the throne of God in glory hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

\* John vi. 35.

† Heb. vi. 18.



L E C T U R E    V I I I .

MATTHEW VI. 12.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE  
OUR DEBTORS.

**I** COME now to speak of a duty that is very strongly insisted on in scripture, but much disregarded in real life. The forgiveness of enemies, or of those who in any way, or from any principle, offend us, is a lesson which human nature is very backward to learn.— But to shew the necessity both of its being learnt and practised by all who would enjoy the divine favour, it is plainly laid down and frequently inculcated in the Bible; and in our text it is not only made a duty, but it is there so ordered by Christ, that if we *comply* not with this duty, in our daily prayer we pray for a daily curse, as we pray for daily bread. *Father, give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

By

By *debts*, the text means trespasses, or offences : and by *debtors*, we are to understand offenders. So that the passage may be read thus—Forgive us our trespasses, or offences, as we forgive them that offend, or trespass against us. And in discoursing from the text, I shall consider it in two great parts :

I. As it regards God and man.

II. As it regards man and man.

I. I am to consider the text as it regards God and man.

And it is remarkable, that man is here represented as a *debtor* to God : that is, he is a Sinner. This is the first particular that presents itself. Man hath sinned against his God, and is looked upon as a debtor to divine justice. In confirmation of what has been said, respecting the word *debts*, these debts are, in another place, expressly called *sins*\*, in that same form of prayer left by Christ for his disciples.

It is no trifling subject, therefore, that we are here called to consider. It is not a subject

\* Luke xi. 4.

to tickle the fancy, to gratify the ear, or to flatter the heart. But it is a subject to humble the soul. It is calculated to bring down our proud looks, to break down our high imaginations, to rouse our sleepy consciences, and to amend our careless lives. The subject tells us, we are sinners: and as sinners we ought to be sorrowful. The subject informs us, that we are debtors: and as debtors, we ought to be humble. It becomes us to take shame to ourselves when we consider how much we owe, and reflect that our infinite Creditor is always present with us. This leads me to remark

That the text implies a *sense* of our condition, whenever we take the words upon our tongues. It implies, that all who say, *Forgive us our debts*, either do, or should, *consider* that they *are* debtors, or *sinners*. All therefore that utter these words, should feel suitable emotions of soul. For, whether they reflect on it or no, they do in effect say, each for himself, unto God—‘I appear before thee as  
 ‘an offender. If I say, I have no sin, I  
 ‘deceive myself, and the truth is not in me.  
 ‘For I have sinned, Father, against heaven,  
 ‘and

‘ and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to  
 ‘ be called thy son. I have erred and strayed  
 ‘ from thy ways like a lost sheep. I have fol-  
 ‘ lowed too much the devices and desires of my  
 ‘ own heart. I have left undone those things  
 ‘ which I ought to have done, and I have done  
 ‘ those things which I ought not to have done;  
 ‘ and there is no health in me : there is by  
 ‘ nature no spiritual health in my soul. Have  
 ‘ mercy upon me therefore, O God of grace,  
 ‘ for I am a poor unhappy offender.”—I remark  
 further, that the person who says unto God,  
*Forgive me my debts*, doth also acknowledge  
 himself a *debtor* ; and may be understood to  
 say, ‘ Lord, I am a debtor to thy justice for all  
 ‘ the offences of my life, if considered out of  
 ‘ Christ. Every sin I have committed, has  
 ‘ been a new debt contracted, till the sum is  
 ‘ swollen to a vast amount. Lord, I confess  
 ‘ it is of thy mercy that I was not long ago  
 ‘ thrust into that prison, from whence there is  
 ‘ no release.’—Our text implies further, that  
 we should sincerely desire the *forgiveness* of  
 our sins. That we should not be easy with  
 the load of our guilt upon our souls, but beg  
 to have it removed. ‘ The petition is,’ says  
 Dr.



Dr. Edwards, ‘that God would forgive us  
 ‘our sins : whence I gather it to be our  
 ‘indispensable concern to crave and beg of God  
 ‘the forgiveness of our sins. We must with  
 ‘great importunity and earnestness request our  
 ‘heavenly Father to cancel all our spiritual  
 ‘debts, that is our sins ; to pardon our iniquities,  
 ‘and to blot out our transgressions. We must  
 ‘be frequently imploring the divine goodness  
 ‘to pass by the miscarriages of our lives, and  
 ‘to remit the punishment of them. We must  
 ‘earnestly pray that we may not be condemned ;  
 ‘and we must pray likewise that we may be  
 ‘absolved and acquitted. And as we must  
 ‘beg the remission of our sins, so we are  
 ‘concerned to crave that we may have a  
 ‘comfortable apprehension and feeling of it  
 ‘in our consciences. This we are obliged  
 ‘by this petition to pray for. And it must  
 ‘be done with all humility, and with the  
 ‘profoundest submission ; for, as the Jews  
 ‘say, a man is not presumed to behave himself  
 ‘impudently before his creditor. We are by  
 ‘reason of our sins miserable debtors to God,  
 ‘and therefore we ought not to appear before  
 ‘him with an unbecoming boldness, but we  
 ‘ought

ought rather to fear and tremble in his sight.' This leads me to remark

That the petition implies, and every petitioner at least tacitly acknowledges it, that we are unable to discharge our own spiritual debts. We pray for the remission, or forgiveness, of them, upon this very supposition. When we apply to God for pardon, we cast ourselves wholly upon mercy.

I know not how better to illustrate this interesting matter, than by our Lord's answer to Peter. Peter came to Jesus with a question relative to forgiveness, and Jesus answered him partly by a parable. "The kingdom of heaven," he told him, "is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents.— But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying,

“ saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I  
 “ will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that  
 “ servant was moved with compassion, and  
 “ loosed him, and forgave him the debt\*.”

Here is represented to us, a man that owes his lord ten thousand talents, but has not wherewith to pay. And though he may flatter himself that he shall at some future period be able to pay the whole; yet his lord knows better, and is assured that he will never be able to discharge any part of his great debt: and if ever he is set at liberty, it must be by the soft hand of pity. He has nothing really to support a *hope* of deliverance, but from mere mercy and divine compassion†.

Now this is precisely our case. We are all debtors. Our debts, our transgressions, are numerous. We owe our lord ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay. We are in the hands of justice, bound and fettered; and are unable to free ourselves. What then is to be done? Surely, our best way is to fall

\* Mat. xviii. † See Rom. iii. 20, 23, 24. Eph. ii. passim. John iii. 36.

down before our Lord, and worship him; acknowledging our inability to discharge the debt. Confessing, that no future obedience of our's; no cries, no tears, no sorrows, no prayers, can by any means atone for what hath been done amiss. That nothing in our power, neither in life nor death, in time nor eternity, can make reparation to injured justice. But that we are tried, condemned and consigned over to misery by the pure law of God, and must inevitably suffer all the punishment denounced against transgressors, unless mercy interpose.

This introduces another remark, which is, that the text points out the necessity of a Saviour. It leads directly to this grand truth, that we are, as Sinners, lost and undone.— And this points out, as with ‘a sun-beam,’ our absolute need of Mercy. And mercy, we are assured in the pure word of God, will be exercised towards us, only through JESUS CHRIST, who is the mediator between God and man. “There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby they “can be saved\*.” And, blessed be God, this

\* Acts iv. 12.

appointed



appointed Saviour “is able to save to the  
“uttermost\*” all true believers, who are all  
true penitents.

In our distress of soul then, Let us *look unto*  
*Jesus*. In our poor estate, let us look unto  
him to be enriched. In our guilt, let us look  
unto him to be cleansed, for his blood is “the  
“blood of sprinkling†,” and it cleanseth true  
believers “from all sin‡.” In our weakness,  
let us look to him for strength, for he can  
“strengthen us with might, by his spirit in  
“the inner man§.” In our darkness, let us  
look to him for light, for “he is the light  
“of the world||.” In our temptations, let  
us look unto him for succour, for having been  
himself tempted, “he is able also to succour  
“them that are tempted‡.” In our chains  
and fetters, let us look to him for liberty, for  
he is a Redeemer, a Deliverer. Hear these  
sweet words, and ponder them well in your  
hearts. Let them be sweeter to you than  
honey; yea, than the honey-comb. “The  
“spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because

\* Heb. vii. 25.

† Heb. xii. 24. and 1 Pet. i. 2.

‡ 1 John i. 7

§ Eph. iii. 16.

|| John viii. 12.

‡ Heb. ii. 18.

“ the

“ the Lord hath anointed me to preach good  
 “ tidings unto the meek : he hath sent me to  
 “ bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim  
 “ liberty to the captives, and the opening of  
 “ the prison to them that are bound\*.” In  
 the fourth of Luke, Christ applies this passage  
 to himself.

Trust not, therefore, my dear hearers, to  
 any thing short of an interest in the mercy of  
 God by Christ Jesus. Be concerned above all  
 things to have your part in the Lord Jesus,  
 for in him alone is salvation. And whenever  
 you utter these words before God, *Forgive*  
*us our debts*, recollect, as you shall be enabled,  
 how clearly they show you the necessity of a  
 union to Christ, who died to make an atone-  
 ment. Suffer them to take you by the hand,  
 if I may be allowed so bold a figure, and  
 lead you to the foot of the cross, where you  
 will find that Jesus has made satisfaction, and  
 paid your debts in blood. This leads me to  
 another remark, which is, that the text im-  
 plies a possibility of obtaining pardon from an  
 offended God.

\* Isai. lxi. 1, &c.

Were

Were there not a possibility of obtaining pardon, we should not be instructed to pray for it. And the *bare possibility* of obtaining pardon from an Almighty Sovereign, whom we have basely offended, should brighten our countenances and rejoice our souls. What then shall we say, to the repeated *assurances* which God hath given us in his word of his willingness to forgive sins, to all them that believe rightly in Christ, and desire to forsake sin? Yea, what shall we say, when we consider that God even *beseeketh*\* us to be reconciled through his dear Son; and condescends to invite us to come to him, that we may have pardon, peace, and eternal life? What astonishing kindness and condescension do we perceive in this mercifully overcoming voice, “Come now, “and let us reason together, saith the Lord: “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be “as white as snow: though they be red like “crimson, they shall be as wool†.” What heavenly consolation do we derive from the rich, the all-satisfying declaration, that “God “can be just‡”—just to his word, to his law, to his government, to Himself, his per-

\* 2 Cor. v. 20.

† Isai. i. 18.

‡ Rom. iii. 36.

fections,

fections, and all his attributes, while “ he is  
 “ the justifier of them that” truly “ believe in  
 “ Jesus!” This comes to the point in hand.  
 This lets us see, that all our debts to divine  
 justice may be forgiven in Jesus : and to this  
 divinely pleasing truth we should turn our eye,  
 when we utter the words of our text. God  
 can forgive our debts, and yet be just to him-  
 self. This makes the matter complete, and  
 shews us that penitent sinners may receive,  
 through Christ, a whole salvation. It shews  
 sinners who are in the gall of bitterness, and  
 in the bonds of iniquity, how they may obtain  
 complete freedom : for “ if the Son shall  
 “ make them free, then will they be free  
 “ indeed\*.”

O ! how delightful is the truth, that “ there  
 “ is forgiveness with God !” What is the  
 world, what would be a thousand worlds, in  
 comparison of this ? O ! how strongly, and  
 yet how tenderly, does this affect the sensible  
 soul ! A suffering Saviour, a dying Jesus, a  
 pardoning God, goodness inexpressible, love  
 surpassing thought, mercy large and free, in-

\* John viii. 36.



invitation on invitation for poor sinners to accept of grace, atonement fully made, justice entirely satisfied; salvation complete and everlasting! What is it we here behold! Come, my fellow-sinners, and see this wondrous sight, which admiring angels desire to pry into\*!

Sincerely do I say, with Dr. Edwards, ‘ O that we may admire and adore this divine clemency and mercy! O that it may be a powerful spring and motive in us to all religious endeavours! The connexion of the Psalmist’s words is observable—“ There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” That is, that thou mayest be worshipped, served, and obeyed: to which God’s forgiving our sins doth kindly invite us.’

‘ If God were not a God pardoning sin, to the believing, humble, and penitent, there could be no ground for obedience, for we might ever despair of being accepted by God. But now we are assured that we shall be accepted; we know that Christ stands ready to embrace us—to save our souls, and

\* See 1 Peter i. 12.

‘ make

‘ make us happy. Therefore we are encouraged to forsake our sins, to repent of our evil ways, to lay hold on the mercy and pardon offered to us, and to *walk worthy* of the Lord unto all *pleasing*.

I might remark further upon the former part of the text, that it teacheth, or ought to teach, those who are converted to God, and even the most circumspect and confirmed among them, the necessity that *they* have to ask for *daily* pardon as they ask for daily bread. But as this is in itself so evident, and as too large a proportion of our time hath already been spent upon the former part of the passage, I haste now to consider the latter; which more particularly regards the conduct of man to man, though this also has ultimately a respect to God likewise: “for God is the “judge.”

Forgive us our debts, *as we forgive our debtors*, says the text; and we have often said this when uttering the divine prayer of which these words are a very significant part. Under this head, I remark first, that it is the common

lot of man, to receive treatment from fellow-creatures which is unpleasant and disagreeable. This the text implies, and it is verified by the experience of all ages and all ranks. In the present depraved state of human nature, “it is impossible but that offences will come.” Let us therefore live in expectation of them: and when they come, let us not be surpris’d, “as though some strange thing happened unto us: but, on the contrary, believe that the same thing hath happened, and will happen, to our brethren which are in the world.”

The text also implies, and every time we repeat it we acknowledge, that it is our duty to *forgive* them that trespass against us. This is one of the great, and may I not say distinguishing, duties of the christian religion: a religion that makes humility indispensable in all its disciples. And humility promotes forbearance. Humility and meekness are indeed the parents of forbearance, and seldom fail to nurse, cherish, and mature it.

The religion of Jesus teaches us to consider and contemplate mankind under the idea  
of

of one large family, and to look upon every man as our brother. By it we are instructed to compassionate one another's infirmities, to "bear one another's burdens, and thus to fulfil the law of Christ," our meek and blessed master. His holy and amiable religion is happily calculated to beget universal good will in the bosoms of those who receive it, and strikes immediately at the root of that pride of punishment, *falsely* termed 'Honour;' at the call of which numbers appear in the field, and, I do not say honourably, but *basely* and *maliciously*, put an end to each others life.

How happy, how infinitely happy, would it be for the world, if the pure and peaceful religion of the Son of God were universally known and felt? What a blessing to Christendom, if all who *call* themselves Christians, lived and acted in a manner becoming that sacred character—that is, if they lived under the sweet influence of the Gospel, which commands them to be kind and gentle, forbearing and forgiving!—A Gospel! which says to us by the mouth of Christ—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to



“ them that hate you, and pray for them which  
 “ despitefully use you, and persecute you. For  
 “ if ye love them only which love you, what  
 “ reward have ye? Do not even the pub-  
 “ licans,” or profligate sinners, “ the same?”

Moreover; By our uttering the words of the text, we do as it were *promise*, and *oblige ourselves*, to forgive enemies, and all them that have injured or offended us. No man that offers up this prayer can afterwards seriously think himself at liberty to revenge an affront or an injury.

The duty of forgiveness is binding on all. It stands on firm ground, independent of this prayer, and *every man* that *nameth the name of Christ* should be ashamed of improper anger, and tremble at the thought of malice and revenge.

But whenever a person repeats the Lord's Prayer, he seems to put, as it were, *his own hand and seal* to the *will* of God, and declares himself pleased with it, and bound by it. And his language is, ‘ Lord, thou hast made it my  
 ‘ duty

‘ duty to look upon every man as my brother:  
 ‘ if any brother offend, thou hast made it my  
 ‘ duty to forgive him. I acknowledge the  
 ‘ duty. I agree to its reasonableness, to its  
 ‘ propriety, to its necessity in a disciple of  
 ‘ Christ, and to its immense usefulness in the  
 ‘ world; and I hereby bind myself to observe  
 ‘ and do it. So help me, Lord.’ We do in  
 this manner swear, if I may so say, unto the  
 Lord, that we will perform this his lawful  
 command. I remark further

That in this prayer, we not only have a  
 regard to futurity, but also to the present time.  
 For we say, Forgive us, as we *forgive*, or *do*  
 forgive; so that it is implied, that we do this  
 moment forgive. That we do not appear  
 before God with malice or ill-will concealed  
 in our hearts against any fellow-creature what-  
 soever, whether high or low, great or small:  
 for this duty extends to all ranks. The ser-  
 vant must not wish ill to his master, nor the  
 master to the servant; the parent to the  
 child, nor the child to the parent, and so on,  
 through all the relations and all the gradations  
 of life.

This prayer implies, that our bosoms are purged from wrath and wickedness; that our hearts are softened; that our affections are sweetened; that our passions are bridled; that we have learnt of the meek and lowly Jesus; that we “have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness\*.”

Again. It must be observed, that all who venture to utter the words of our text before the Lord, and do *not* forgive man his offences, do in reality pray for a curse upon themselves. They do neither more nor less than beg of God *not* to forgive them. They do not mean and intend this, but to this does the petition, in such circumstances, amount.

We expressly say, *Forgive us, as we forgive*; that is, forgive us our offences against thee, *as we* forgive others their offences against us. Now when a man says this, with malignity, unkindness, or ill-will, in his heart, to any person upon the earth; if this be uttered with

\* Eph. iv. 22, &c.

an unrelenting and unforgiving disposition, should the person so praying be dealt with according to his prayer, the Divine Being would *not forgive his sins*, would not be reconciled unto his soul, but retain against him his displeasure. So that, according to the exact tenor of this petition, the man who wishes any evil, whether greater or less, to the body or the soul of his fellow-creature, and uses this prayer, he has just reason to dread that the very same evil he wishes another may fall upon himself. Or if not so, he has reason to fear, that God, who searcheth the heart, will take him at his word, and forgive him *no more than he forgives his fellow-men*.

Now let us all seriously consider, First, how often *we* have offended in this way. Let us humble ourselves before God on account of such offences, and earnestly beg of God, in the name of Christ, to forgive what is past, and to prevent us, by his grace, from repeating our former iniquities. For

Secondly, It appears very inconsistent with the christian character, to indulge any unkindness



ness in our bosoms towards our fellow-creatures. This is the voice of our holy religion.  
 “ Be patient towards all men. See that none  
 “ render evil for evil unto any man. In malice  
 “ be ye children. Let all bitterness, and wrath,  
 “ and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking  
 “ be put away from you, with all malice.  
 “ Let your moderation be known unto all  
 “ all men\*. The wisdom that is from above  
 “ is

\* The time has long since elapsed, when to inculcate the amiable virtues, and enforce the christian duties, of moderation, mutual love, forbearance, and kindness, was more needful than at present. Sorry am I, to see the latter part of the eighteenth century of the Christian æra disturbed by party brawls, and disgraced, as in this land it is, by fierce, acrimonious disputes, both of a religious and political nature. But as long as Church-men look, as from some superior station, down with supercilious contempt on Dissenters, and Dissenters return this treatment, by despising Church-men, the times cannot be what the lovers of peace and concord wish them. These causes will have their disagreeable effects.

How long will men suffer themselves to be governed by the prejudice of *names*? What! Are we not *all* BRETHREN? Have we not all one Father? Must we not all stand at the same judgment seat? Why then do we “ set at nought each  
 “ other?” Why do we not regard the voice of reason, and the precepts of our holy religion, and “ *love as brethren?*” Why are we not “ pitiful and courteous,” kind and affectionate? Let these words sink down deep into our hearts,  
 and

“ is *gentle*. Charity suffereth long, and is  
 “ kind.—Charity is not easily provoked.—  
 “ Charity rejoiceth not in evil, but its office  
 “ is to do all manner of good.” I infer

Thirdly, That it matters not, in this solemn  
 business it avails not, for persons to say, they  
 never repeat the Lord’s Prayer, and therefore  
 they do not involve themselves in the miser-  
 able consequences of contradicting and cursing  
 themselves—for all who profess discipleship  
 to Christ, all who call themselves Christians,  
 whether they do or do not repeat the Lord’s  
 Prayer, if they forgive not all men their  
 offences against them, do, in this instance,  
 “ deny the faith, and judge themselves un-  
 “ worthy of eternal life.” For

Fourthly, there is no salvation, according  
 to the express words of Christ, for those who

and produce their proper effect on our lives—“ Thou shalt  
 “ *love thy neighbour as thyself*. But if ye bite and devour  
 “ one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of  
 “ another\*.” I cannot conclude this note without asking,  
 How will those men, who now openly oppose, or secretly  
 despise, each other, look upon one another in HEAVEN,  
 should they (as I wish they may) finally meet *there*!

\* Gal. v. 14, 15.

are

are of an unforgiving spirit, and actually do retain malice in their hearts against any fellow-creature. The miserable end of such is set before us by our Lord in the close of the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew. With the unforgiving and revengeful servant, "his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise," says Christ, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye *from your hearts* forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

To conclude. May we from this hour, give all diligence to be reconciled to God, and all mankind, and finally be fitted for the Heaven of purity and love, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, *Amen.*

## LECTURE IX.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

A SOUL is of infinite value, and too much care cannot be taken of it. So numerous are the enemies with which it is beset, that every man has sufficient reason to be alarmed for his own safety. The careless and the prayerless are never likely to reach the Heaven of which they vainly talk, but are in danger of being plunged into that hell, whose terrors they affect to despise.

Our blessed Lord, who knew both the worth and the peril of immortal souls, has provided a remedy for his people, by instructing them in their daily prayer, to say to their heavenly Father—*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* In discoursing from these words, *Lead us not into temptation*, I shall attempt to shew

I. How



I. How God is said in Scripture to tempt men.

II. How they are tempted from other quarters.

III. What it is they are particularly to pray against, when they beg of God *not to lead them into temptation.*

I. I shall endeavour to shew, how God is said in Scripture to tempt mankind. And according to Scripture he is said to do it by particular trials. Of this we have several famous instances in the Bible. The case of Abraham first recommends itself to our attention. The twelfth chapter of the book of Genesis begins with informing us, that “ the Lord  
“ said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country,  
“ and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s  
“ house, unto a land that I will shew thee.” The apostle Paul, in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, mentions this circumstance of Abraham’s leaving his father’s house and his native country, among the extraordinary instances of ancient faith. “ By faith Abraham  
“ when he was called to go out into a place  
“ which

“ which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; *and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*” This was no small trial, we may suppose, to flesh and blood, and may not improperly be called, the first temptation that Abram received from God; for God’s temptations are *trials*, as will hereafter appear.

The next and principal that respects Abraham, is that very extraordinary command to offer up his son Isaac. “ It came to pass after these things,” says the sacred historian, “ that God did tempt Abraham; saying, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering\*.”

The Apostle speaking of this matter, says, “ By faith Abraham when he was *tried*, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son†.” It deserves to be noticed, that the Apostle speaks of Abraham’s being *tried*, when he was called upon to offer up his son. And

\* Gen. xxii.

† Heb. xi. 17.

this is the precise idea which we ought to receive from the word *tempt*, in the book of Genesis, when the Lord is said to *tempt Abraham*. And with this agrees what was said to Abraham by the angel which prevented the death of Isaac. “The angel of the Lord  
 “called, and said unto Abraham, Lay not  
 “thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou  
 “any thing unto him : for now I know  
 “that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast  
 “not withheld thy son, thine only son from  
 “me.”

This proves that it was a trial. Not that God was, or could be, ignorant of Abraham's mind and disposition, for through all generations he *knoweth what is in man*, and no secret thought can be withheld from him. But this trial of Abraham had several wise reasons in it. As, in the first place, by this means Abraham proved himself, and knew that he was in the faith. In the second place, This inculcated upon him the necessity of absolute submission and ready obedience to the divine will in the most difficult cases. In the third place, Through Abraham this idea of sub-  
 mission

mission was to be conveyed to all succeeding ages of the world; and all who, like him, readily perform those duties which are most hard to flesh and blood, are called "the children of faithful Abraham." In the fourth place, The offering up of Isaac seems to be designed as a type of Christ, the Son of God, who was in the fulness of time to be offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the Lord's people.

The next instance I shall mention, is that of the Israelites, whose painful march through the wilderness was a *trial* of no small magnitude. We are told, that God "led them forty years in the wilderness to *prove* them, and to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep his commandments, or no\*." This is speaking after the manner of men; and we are to understand by it; that God proved this people to *themselves*, and let them see what was in their *own hearts*, that they might not mistake their true character; which is a very easy thing, and there is scarcely any thing more common among unenlightened

\* Deut. viii. 2.



and ungodly men. The next instance I shall name, is that of Job, when Satan was permitted to deprive him of his property, his children and his health. This was a great trial, and a trial from God. By which instance we learn the following things. In the first place, That Satan has an inveterate malice against mankind. In the second place, That if he could have his will, he would deprive them of all their comfort; especially would he do this by the servants of the Lord. In the third place, That he is bound: he is in the power of God, and with all his malice and rage, he cannot hurt, without permission. In the fourth place, That the best of people may, for a season, be much harassed and troubled by Satan. But in the fifth place we learn, That they are nevertheless safe under the kind protection and merciful guardianship of their Almighty Father.—All these things being considered, we perceive wise ends in God's thus tempting, or *trying*, his servant Job.

If time would allow me to enlarge upon this part of my subject, the next instances of God's tempting, or proving, his servants, demanding our regard, would be the remarkable  
cases

cases of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who for their faithful adherence to their God, were cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace : and of holy Daniel, who, for the same cause, was cast into the den of lions. But the flames of the furnace only tend to brighten the truth, render more visible the reality and blessedness of vital religion, and illustrate the happy consequences of *trusting in God at all times*. And the roaring of the lions only serve to sound forth the safety of true believers; the constant care of Him whom they serve; the entire folly as well as wickedness of “fighting against God,” in any way; the impossibility of cursing, to any effect, them whom God is determined to bless; and the high praises of Him who hath said to all and every of his faithful servants, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Now in all these instances, see the manner in which God is said to *tempt*. From all these examples, you find that God’s temptations are *trials*, without the least mixture of sin. Yea, they are bright displays of wisdom mixed with goodness; all designed to promote knowledge,

caution and obedience among men, without which they could not be happy. So that we may truly say, all were designed to promote the glory of God and the best welfare of man. I call you, therefore, to witness this day, that “ God cannot be tempted with evil, neither,” in this sense, “ tempteth he any man ; but “ every man is tempted, when he is drawn “ away of his own lust, and enticed\*.”

This introduces our Second Head, under which I am to shew from what quarters men are really tempted to sin.

And First ; They are tempted from themselves. Had man continued in the state in which God created him, he would never have been thus his own foe. He was made in the image of God. And that image consisted in wisdom, purity and goodness. Or, as the apostle speaks of the new-creature, who is recovered by divine grace, man was “ created after God, “ in righteousness and true holiness†.” But how, alas ! is he fallen ! His understanding is

\* James i.

† Eph. iv. 24.

become dark. His affections are become sensual. His will is perverse. His desires are impure. His heart has entirely apostatized from God. He naturally wishes to think little of God, and to have less to do with him. His soul is polluted by a thousand impurities. His whole nature is corrupt and sinful.—  
 “ From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness; but he is full of wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores,” as a prophet expresses it; so that man is become a filthy, a guilty, and may I not say, a loathsome creature. His forsaking the living God, and becoming the servant of sin, hath rendered him vile in the eyes of infinite purity, and an object of divine displeasure. “ God is angry with the wicked every day\*.”

It is no wonder if a creature of this description is his own tempter. And it is well known, from scripture and experience, that man is so. He hath within him *an evil heart of unbelief* that often leads him into temptation, and thus leads him astray.

\* Psal. vii. 11.



According to St. James ; “ A man is “ tempted, when he is drawn away of his *own* “ *lust*, and enticed.” The propensities of the human heart, are to that which is evil. And those propensities are not few and feeble, but they are many and mighty. They are not sluggish and inactive, but restless and vigorous. Sometimes they dispose a man to pride, and sometimes to passion. Sometimes they rouse him to anger, and spur him to revenge ; and at other times they powerfully incline him to guilty pleasures, and send him in pursuit of sensual gratifications. At all times, however, they indispose him for holy thoughts, meditations, words and works.— They keep him from his God, and seem to be an effectual barrier in the way to heaven. This proves, for this, in a great measure, is the cause of, what Christ hath declared in his word, that “ strait is the gate, and narrow is “ the way which leadeth unto life ;” and this is the reason why there be but “ few that find “ it\*.” On this particular I only add, that one apostle expressly says, that “ the flesh “ lusteth against the spirit†”—and another

\* Matt. vii. 14.

† Gal. v. 17.

apostle has these remarkable words, “Dearly  
 “beloved, I beseech you as strangers and  
 “pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which  
 “war against the soul\*.” I shall close with  
 the still more mortifying language of St. Paul.  
 These are his words—“To be carnally minded,  
 “is death”—“Because the carnal,” or unre-  
 generated “mind, is enmity against God†.”  
 This then is one principal source of temptation,  
 our own fallen, depraved and wicked nature.

Secondly. There are outward temptations  
 suited to our inward corruptions : and they  
 also are numerous. Indeed, such is the situ-  
 ation and condition of things, in these dege-  
 nerate days, that we can go no whither, without  
 being assaulted by some temptation or other.  
 There are in the world so many species of  
 impiety ; so much pride and anger, so much  
 levity and vanity, so much earthly-mindedness  
 and love of money, so many covetous practices, so  
 much design and imposition, so much impurity,  
 intemperance and intrigue, so much profanity,  
 falsehood and sinful refinement, so much bold-

\* 1 Pet. ii. 11.

† Rom. viii. 6, 7.

ness of face and manners, so much boasting and lying, so much secret dislike of true religion, and that manifested either by sneers, by refined jests, by witty ridicule, or by a certain indifference and coldness when it is mentioned, as though its very name were offensive, and the thing itself insufferable: yea, I must add, that there is so much open and avowed contempt of sabbaths, of prayer, of the gospel when exhibited in the true spirit of Christ and his apostles, and such a rooted dislike of every thing truly serious, and iniquities of all kinds do so much and so generally abound, and it is become so much the fashion to be irreligious, and so much the custom to scoff at or despise those who wish to live according to the commands and example which Christ hath left them, that almost every man may be said to be tempted, more or less, to deny his Saviour, renounce his faith and destroy his soul. That is, he is tempted to forsake the word of God in point of direction, and to take the world for his guide; to neglect the example of Christ, and to follow the fashions and customs of unholy men; and to comply, *would* be to deny Christ,

and

and effectually destroy the soul. For Christ himself hath assured us, that unless we take up our cross, and in this respect deny ourselves, and all the tempters and temptations we meet with, we cannot be his disciples\*. Our Lord further expresses himself on this subject in words which may well awaken a holy jealousy in our souls. “Whosoever,” says he, “shall  
 “be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this  
 “adulterous and sinful generation, of him also  
 “shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he  
 “cometh in the glory of his Father, with  
 “the holy angels†.”

And yet we are all tempted to be ashamed of him, in some shape or other; and that too even by persons who *call* themselves Christians. Surely, the name of Christian to such, serves no one permanently valuable purpose. But this it does—and it grieves my soul to think of it—it serves to delude them in this world, and it will inevitably and inflexibly condemn them in the next, if they repent not, and *live* as Christians.

\* Luke xiv. 27.

† Mark viii. 38.

Experience,



Experience, alas ! knows but too well what an enemy this world is to souls. But could we suppose a young person to be so wholly ignorant of the state of things around him, and of the world in general, as never to have perceived any danger from this quarter, yet on reading the Scriptures he might learn, That “ the “ world lieth in wickedness,” that its “ friend- “ ship is enmity with God\*,” and that its customs, fashions, and temptations, if complied with, would lead him further and further from his heavenly Father, till they had plunged him into everlasting misery and disgrace. “ For all that is in the world,” saith the apostle John, “ the lust of the flesh, and “ the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is “ not of the Father, but is of the world.”

Thirdly. There is another tempter, from which mankind are in no small danger ; and that is, “ the old serpent,” or the devil. He betrayed and ruined even in paradise. In all ages he has uniformly preserved his character of “ deceiver” and “ destroyer.” He even

\* See 1 John i. *passim*.

ventured to assault the blessed Jesus himself, who “ was led of the spirit into the wilderness, “ to be tempted of the devil\*.” This same wicked being put it into the heart of Judas to betray his master†; and he “ filled the heart of “ Ananias to lie unto the Holy Ghost‡.” And the apostle Peter was so sensible of the peril men are in from this quarter, that he solemnly warns them of it, in these words—“ Be sober: “ be vigilant : because your adversary the “ devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seek- “ ing whom he may devour§.”

From a view of these enemies, what reason have we all to adopt the words of the text, and to say to God, with a sincere and feeling heart, *Lead us not into temptation.* Which reflection introduces our last head, under which I am to shew, what we are particularly to pray for, when we beg of God not to lead us into temptation. I hope it is sufficiently clear, that God doth not, that as a Being of perfect rectitude he cannot, tempt to evil; for there is no iniquity with him, and “ he is of

\* Matt. iv. 1.

† John xiii. 2.

‡ Acts v. 3.

§ 1 Peter v. 8.

“ purer

“ purer eyes than to behold iniquity\* ” in his creatures, without detestation and righteous displeasure. We may be assured, therefore, that we are not instructed to pray to God, that he would not inspire us with unholy thoughts, fill us with unholy desires, and lead us on to unholy practices : for this would be to make God altogether such an one as ourselves ; or rather, it would be to suppose him something worse ; at the bare mention of which we may well be filled with a kind of religious horror.

But as this is the case, some other sense must be found out for the petition in the text ; and I shall endeavour to give it you in a few short particulars. And First, when we say unto God, *Lead us not into temptation*, we ought to be sensible of the dangers which attend our souls in the present life, and, with submission, beg of God to place us in such circumstances and situations, as may be supposed to be least hazardous to our eternal welfare. Thus the pious Agur prayed ; and his prayer has been admired and celebrated by the wise of all ages since he uttered it : from a

\* Hab. i. 13.

sense of the danger which attends all worldly distinctions, and all extremes of circumstances, he prayed to God in these words of wisdom—  
 “ Remove far from me vanity and lies : give  
 “ me neither poverty nor riches : feed me with  
 “ food convenient for me : lest I be full, and  
 “ deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or  
 “ lest I be poor,” so depressed with poverty as  
 to be tempted to “ steal, and take the name  
 “ of my God in vain\*.”

Secondly ; When we say, *Lead us not into temptation*, we ought to pray that, whatever station Providence may place us in, however great, and however numerous may be our temptations, from the devil, the world, and the flesh, we may not be tempted above what God will enable us to bear. We do in reality pray for a sufficiency of divine grace to withstand and to overcome all sollicitations to evil, from every quarter ; that we may not wound our consciences ; that we may not grieve the righteous ; that we may not assist or encourage others to sin, and thus injure the wicked ; that we may not forfeit our hope in Christ ;

\* Prov. xxx. 8, &c.

and



and that we may not offend God, and provoke him to plague or destroy us. This, I say, is what we pray for, if we pray with understanding.

Thirdly ; When we say unto God, *Lead us not into temptation*, we pray for all the *means* necessary to our preservation. For instance, we pray for *faith*, for “ this is the victory that “ overcometh the world\*,” and this also leads to obedience, for “ faith worketh by love†.” We also must be supposed to pray for *patience*, to bear the whole will of God, in the most trying circumstances, that we may not murmur nor repine. The same may be said of all other graces and virtues, according to our respective situations and necessities.

Fourthly ; When we pray not to be led into temptation, we in effect pray that nothing may be removed which now puts a useful restraint upon our thoughts, words, or works. For instance, if we have godly parents, masters, husbands, wives, brethren, sisters, relatives or other friends, who watch for our souls, and

\* 1 John v. 4.      † Gal. v. 6.

rebuke sin whenever they see it in us, we do in effect pray that such religious friends may be continued to us, that they may be the means in God's hand of promoting our salvation. Especially must we be understood to pray, that the Bible may be continued to us, and that holy Ministers may not be removed from us, lest our souls die for want of "food convenient for them."

Lastly. When we utter the petition in the text, we do above all things pray, if we pray aright, that God himself will never leave us; for were HE to leave us, we should most undoubtedly, perish everlastingly. We pray that the devil may not have his will upon us, but that we may ever be the care of our Almighty Father; that he will "keep us night and day; "and, lest any hurt us," that he would "watch over us every moment\*." Merciful God! Do thou incline our hearts to pray this prayer, and graciously give us an answer of peace.

From what has been said, we may infer, in the first place, the necessity there is for a

\* Isai. xxvii. 3.

change

change of heart in every one of us, before we can be fit either for the presence or the service of God. By nature, it is clear, we are in a sad state; we are in a deplorable condition; full of sin and defilement. Well therefore might Christ say, "Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God\*." Pray earnestly then for a new heart.

In the Second Place; So many and so powerful are the enemies of our souls, that there is no safety for us, but in our God. Let us therefore put ourselves under his care *every day, and every hour in the day*. And instead of trusting to ourselves, let us cry, *Hold Thou me up, O God, and I shall be safe†*.

In the Third Place; How shocking is it in men to charge, in any way, by any means, or by any insinuations, the God of all grace, with leading them into sin? Let all impenitent sinners know, that God is righteous; that he will condemn them and their sins; that he will execute his righteous vengeance upon wilful transgressors, and be *clear when he judgeth*.

\* John iii. 3.

† Psal. cxix. 117.

Finally.

Finally. Let us all beg of God to grant us the teachings of his Holy Spirit. He is “the Spirit of truth,” and “will guide us into all truth\*.” “Likewise the Spirit also will help our infirmities,” and quicken our devotions, and dictate our petitions ; for of ourselves “we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself will make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered†.” He is also the Spirit of holiness, purity, or sanctification. And for this reason should we earnestly desire that he may dwell within us ; for then shall we be made fit and ready for “every good word and work,” and our persons and performances will be acceptable unto God, we “being sanctified by the Holy Ghost‡.”

\* John xvi. 13.

† Rom. viii. 26.

‡ Rom. xv. 16.



## LECTURE X.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT  
DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

**H**APPY is the man that feareth always. Presumption is a dangerous thing. Pride and self-sufficiency go before destruction. Jesus Christ hath taught his disciples to “watch and pray.”—Watchfulness and prayer are good weapons against the enemies of our salvation, and without them we shall not succeed in our spiritual warfare.

If heaven be our desire, if holiness be our delight, if the cross of Christ is our honour, if the world and its allies are properly feared, if our souls are properly valued, if the divine favour is suitably prized, and if eternity be duly considered, let us daily and seriously make our prayer to Almighty God in these words,

*Lead*

*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* In discoursing from this passage, I shall endeavour to shew

I. What is implied in it on God's side.

II. What is implied in it on the side of man.

And III. I will name some helps against temptation, and the evil thereof.

I. I shall endeavour to shew what is implied on the side of God, in this petition, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* And I begin with observing, that Christ by instructing us thus to pray, does not intimate that God will, or that we should expect him to, preserve us from all temptation. On the contrary, we are assured that trials and temptations await us all; that "the flesh will lust against the spirit;" that "the law in our members will war against the law of our minds;" that the world, which is the enemy of God, will always be the enemy of our souls; "that Satan, as a roaring lion, is continually seeking whom he may devour; and that it is through much tribulation that any enter into the kingdom

“of heaven.” It is plain, therefore, that none are to expect to be wholly delivered from temptation. And it would be a dangerous mistake to suppose such a thing. There is no favourable situation in life, no wise foresight or prudent contrivance, no happy combination of circumstances, that can possibly shelter us from the painful assaults of our spiritual adversaries, much less absolutely place us beyond their reach.

In some situations men are, undoubtedly, less exposed than in others. And yet, it is always found upon experiment, that every situation has its peculiar temptations, and furnishes out its share of danger. Inasmuch, that some who have unwisely imagined that if they could be situated just so or so, or if they could be placed in some certain circumstances, which they themselves could mark out, they should then be happy ; they should be almost, if not altogether, freed from temptations ; they should serve the Lord without distraction ; they should lead a life of much sweeter communion with God, and enjoy something like a heaven on earth. When these persons have, by some  
turn

turn in providence, been brought into the very situations they thought so highly of, and so earnestly coveted, they have found them just the reverse of what they expected; and instead of being, by a change of circumstances, delightfully placed on the borders of heaven, they have, with the deep sorrow of disappointment in their hearts, confessed that their paradise was only imaginary, and they have received a full, though distressing conviction, that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and that the violent do, in every situation, take it by force\*." That they must force their way, by "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God†," and by other divine assistances, through all the opposition of flesh and blood, the powers of the prince of the air, and all the legions of foes with which they are encompassed.

Settle it therefore in your hearts, that you are never to be freed from temptations while you are in the body. But for your comfort I remark to you, in the next place, that the text

\* Matt. xi. 12.

† Eph. vi. 17.



implies, that God is able to keep his servants in any, and in every situation, in which they are placed by his providence, whatever may be the temptations of that situation.

There is nothing too hard for God. He can inspire with faith, with courage, with resolution, with patience, with prudence, and with whatever else is necessary to the preservation of them that fear him. He can preserve from pride in prosperity, and from fretfulness in adversity ; from insolence in authority, and from reluctance in subjection ; from carelessness in health, and from repining in sickness ; from vanity and boasting in the bright day of honour and applause, and from sullen grief in the dark season of reproach and distress ; he can teach his servants “ how to be abased, and “ how to abound : every where and in all “ things” he can instruct them, “ both to be “ full and to be hungry, both to abound and “ to suffer need ;” and help them to bear all with an equal mind. And, like men who have but little to do with time, and are intent upon preparing for eternity, he can enable them to learn, “ in whatsoever state they are, therewith “ to

“to be content.” He can make the king humble, and the beggar thankful: the healthy holy, and the dying happy. “Trust then in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” And with pleasure let me add, in Him is everlasting goodness also. This introduces a third remark, which is, that the text implies, that God *will* undertake for them who desire his protection, and seek it with their whole heart.

This, Christians, is matter of unspeakable consolation to you, who are seriously concerned for the salvation of your souls, and desire nothing so much as to overcome sin and please your God. Though your heavenly Father may permit you to be tried by many and great temptations, yet he will deliver you from the *evil* of them. You may be sometimes in the fire, but you shall not be burnt: you may be called to pass through the water, but you shall not be drowned: according to God’s most gracious promise to each of his servants, in the forty-third chapter of Isaiah. “Thus saith the Lord “that created thee,” O Christian, “and he that “formed thee,” O humble believer, “Fear  
P 4 “not,

“ not, for I have redeemed thee ; I have called  
 “ thee by thy name : thou art mine. When  
 “ thou passest through the waters, I will be  
 “ with thee ; and through the rivers, they  
 “ shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest  
 “ through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt ;  
 “ neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.  
 “ For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One  
 “ of Israel, thy Saviour.”

Precious words, and full of comfort. Take them, Christians, to your hearts; embrace them to your souls, and let them be the joy and rejoicing of your spirits. And that I may, if possible, add to your confidence and comfort, I will remind you of another sweet portion of scripture, which contains a promise of inestimable value. An Apostle says, “ God is faithful ; who will not suffer you to be  
 “ tempted above that ye are able ; but will  
 “ with the temptation also, make a way to  
 “ escape, that ye may be able to bear it\*.” Fear not then, ye faints of the Most High ; if God is for you, who can be against you ? Let not your hearts faint, neither let your

\* 1 Cor. x. 13.

minds be troubled, for ye shall be “able to do  
 “all things through Christ which strengthen-  
 “eth you\*.”

Further. The text may imply a hope, that God, our Father and Friend, will overrule our temptations, trials and troubles to the final welfare of our souls. It is the prerogative of God only, to educe good from evil. He is able to do this, and in instances not a few he hath done it. He suffered Joseph to be sold, to be carried into Egypt, to be particularly tempted, gave him grace to vanquish the temptation, and permitted him for his integrity to be thrown into prison; but all with a view to exalt him to honour, to set him on high, to make him governor of the land, to lay up a plenty against the season of famine, to preserve the life of his own family, and the lives of multitudes beside, to comfort the heart and revive the drooping spirits of his aged Father, and to make him a much more extensive blessing than he otherwise would have been.

So God permitted his Son, Jesus Christ, to be “taken, and with wicked hands to be cru-

\* Phil. iv. 13.

“cified



“cified and slain;” but all with a view through his death to grant life and immortality, heaven and eternal blessedness, to thousands and tens of thousands of the human race.—So God suffered his Prophets and Apostles, and many of his most faithful servants, to be poor and despised; reproached and persecuted; bound and imprisoned; chained and tortured; and sometimes he suffered their enemies to do all they could do, which was to *kill the body*; but all tended, in the hand of infinite wisdom, almighty power and perfect goodness, to spread truth, to weaken error, to open the eyes of mankind, to convince their hearts, to save their souls, and ultimately to bring honour unto the God of grace.

And in all lesser trials, the benefits may be in proportion. For of this we are assured by an eminent servant of God; a man who was eminent for services and eminent for sufferings; who knew the truth of what he said, and had frequently felt what he solemnly declared: by this man we are told that, “tribulation  
 “worketh patience—and patience, experience  
 “—and experience, hope—and hope maketh  
 “not ashamed,” but giveth humble confidence  
 where “the love of God is shed abroad upon  
 “the

“ the heart, by the Holy Ghost\*, which is  
 “ imparted, in a greater or less degree, to them  
 “ that *believe*.”

Let Christians then comfort one another with these views and these words. Let them be encouraged in their prayers to God, with the prospect that he will deliver them from the evil to which they stand exposed ; with the hope that even their *temptations* shall, in the final event of things, be converted into blessings, and that the most painful occurrences of the present life shall advance the interest of a better. For the foundation of this animating and invaluable hope, we have a general promise, or rather a positive declaration, which every good man may safely apply to himself.—“ We know,” says St. Paul, “ that all things “ work together for good to them that love “ God, to them who are the called according “ to his purpose†.” But to “ love God,” and to be the “ called according to his purpose,” denotes much more than mere profession ; with this remark I introduce the Second Head of this discourse : under which I am briefly to

\* Rom. v.

† Rom. viii. 28.

shew,

shew, what is implied on our side, when we utter these words before the Lord, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

In the first place, It is implied on our side, that we are sensible of the *evil* of Sin, and that we know our own danger from it. Without this sense and this knowledge, our devotion is ignorance, and our prayers are vain. If we have not "the wisdom which is from above" to teach us our true state, we shall raise only our voices to heaven, and leave our hearts behind. We may indeed multiply our words, and send up many petitions, but they will never pierce the skies, so as to bring down any blessing, but, like an idle echo from a rock, return to us void of all profit. Whatever value man may set upon his unmeaning supplications, we are assured from the best authority, that God, who searcheth the heart, is displeased with "the sacrifice of fools\*." Let us remember, that it is not our uttering the Lord's Prayer, however excellent in itself, that will carry us to glory, or do us the least good, unless we understand and consider what we are about.

\* See Prov. xv. 8. and Eccles. v. 1. 2.

In vain shall we say, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*, unless we know our danger from temptation, and look upon the evil of sin as the worst of all evils this side hell. Therefore

In the second place, The text implies in all who presume to utter it, a desire of being preserved from the power and mischief of sin. Unless we have this desire, we do but mock God, when we pretend to beg of him to *deliver us from evil*. The text implies a sincere hatred of all iniquity, a sound approbation of all God's commands, a love to the gospel of Christ, a wish to obey it, a desire after universal holiness, and a longing after likeness to God, in purity and goodness. It becomes us, therefore, to enquire, whether these things be found in us.

In the third place, The text implies, that we do now use, and that we still intend to use, our own best endeavours against temptations to evil. To pray to God to deliver us from any calamity, is to lay ourselves under a very sacred obligation, to do what we can to prevent  
that



that calamity from coming upon us. And if we do, not exert ourselves accordingly, we shall be found liars before God. In this case, our very prayers will rise in judgment against us, and we shall be obliged to pass condemnation on our own souls.

We say to our heavenly Father, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* And if we do not take such measures as we believe will most effectually secure us from sin ; if we do not consider where our danger lies, and sincerely strive to guard against it, the time is coming when our reason, our understanding, our consciences, and our base hearts, will condemn us ; and the consequences of our guilty practice will fall upon our deceitful, but then helpless souls, like so many mill-stones from the hand of divine vengeance, and crush us down to endless misery and eternal shame.

In the fourth place, It follows then, that among other things the text implies, that we are to forsake all sinful companions. This will be clear to us, when we consider, that sinful company not only leads to evil, but that  
it

it is itself evil and poisonous. We pray, not to be led into temptation ; but evil company is full of temptation. The ungodly are continually laying snares for their fellow-creatures, and such is their success, that they draw many into the paths of vice, and guide them in the highway to damnation. Profane swearers, drunkards, fornicators, thieves, the overreaching, and all liars, and all others who do not fear and love God, and delight in his service, and seek to promote his honour, however decent they may appear, all such persons are dangerous companions, and may, either by more secret and unperceived, or by more open and visible methods, produce that effect upon our minds which may end in ruin. We are naturally afar off from God, and love the distance well. And such company as I have described, is calculated to increase our natural indifference for religion, to lessen our sense of sin, to turn our horror for some particular vices into a kind of complacency, to abate of our concern for our souls, to chase the thoughts of death from our minds, to make us less afraid of “a judgment to come,” and to keep us back from “preparing to meet our God.”

Judge

Judge then what must be the final issue. Consider what must be the awful consequences, if such companions are our choice. What can we think of intreating the ever-blessed God not to lead us into temptation, if we wilfully thrust ourselves into it? Or, with what face can we beg of God to deliver us from evil, if in our life we really court the evil we seem to shun and dread in our prayers! "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." Such solemn mockery must be the detestation of holy angels, and an abomination to the God of angels. Let it be remembered, that every time we utter the words of our text before the Lord, we do, as it were, promise and vow to our Creator and Judge, that we will "come out from among the wicked, and be separate;" that we will "not touch the unclean thing;" that we will no longer do, meddle with, countenance or in any measure encourage, "the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them:" that we will, by God's gracious assistance, shun the way to iniquity, profit by our former losses, and avoid the occasions and incentives to evil; and finally, that we will "lay aside every weight, and the

"sin

“ sin which doth most easily beset us, and run  
 “ the race that is set before us, looking unto  
 “ Jesus, the author and finisher of faith ;”  
 making it appear by all our conduct, that we  
 “ hate even the garments spotted with the  
 “ flesh.” From this I pass to the last thing I  
 proposed ; which is

III. To name a few helps against tempta-  
 tion, and the evil thereof.

And in the first place, Let me persuade you  
 to strive after, and always to keep up in your  
 minds, a lively sense of what Jesus Christ  
 endured on the cross. Think on his love ;  
 think on his humility ; reflect on his sufferings,  
 his crucifixion, his groans, his pains, his agonies,  
 his darkness and his death. Remember what  
 occasioned all his pains of body and pangs of  
 mind. What was the cause, Christians, of  
 Christ’s dying on the ignominious cross ?—  
 You must acknowledge, that sin, that accursed  
 thing called *sin*, was the cause of Jesus’ death.  
 Had it not been for sin, the Son of God had  
 not died. And will you continue in sin ?  
 Will you “ crucify to yourselves the Son of  
 Q God



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“ God afresh, and put him to an open shame,” by a shameful, disobedient, and guilty life ? God forbid. Rather may we say, and act agreeably, “ what shall we render unto the “ Lord for all his benefits towards us !”

In the second place, Let us endeavour to impress upon our minds a deep sense of the miseries and agonies hereafter to be endured, by all that will presume to sin against the grace of the Gospel. Dreadful indeed will it be for any to perish from under the sound of salvation. If we are found unconverted and unpardoned sinners at the last, it would have been infinitely better for us never to have been born. The blood of Christ which should have saved us, will condemn us ; and of all condemnations that is the most awful, confounding, and distressing, which is written in the blood of a slighted and offended Saviour. Miserable beyond all expression, and even beyond all conception, will be the future state of those, who in the present life make light of sin, do not conscientiously shun temptations to it, and heartily dread the evil of it, and every day strive to be “ perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

In

In the third place, Be not content without doing all that can be done for your own safety. Be faithful in the use of all the means which your heavenly Father affords you. Pray to him every day, in sincerity and with fervour. Beg of him to “work in you both to will and to “do of his good pleasure;” and then comply with the Apostle’s command, to “work out “your own salvation, with fear and trembling.” Read the scriptures, and pray that you may understand their meaning, and feel their power. If you would be upright with God and your own souls, often examine yourselves whether the actions you perform, the words you speak and the thoughts you love and allow, are such as the holy scriptures allow and encourage. If not, hate them; oppose them, and never more be reconciled unto them. I add to all this, that if we would be safe, we must be diffident and watchful. Christ hath commanded us to “watch and pray, that we fall “not into temptation.” And St. Paul hath left us this charge, that we “make prayers and “supplications unto God, watching thereunto, “with all perseverance.”



In the last place, It becomes us to review our life, and to beg the Lord to grant us true repentance for all that hath hitherto been amiss. If we feel a real *godly sorrow* for past transgressions, it may prove one of the most effectual bars to the commission of fresh offences. It will embitter sin, and make it loathsome to our afflicted souls. Yea, the very thought of it would add to the smart of our wounded consciences, and cause our broken hearts to bleed anew. Let us then earnestly seek that true repentance which will not need *to be repented of* when we come to die; and let us also recollect by what means we have heretofore been drawn into sin, and arm ourselves with faith and firmness to resist in future. And in this way, with a proper dependence upon God's grace and Spirit, we shall escape many temptations which we should otherwise fall into, and be happily delivered from the *evil* of those which it is not in our power to avoid.

I conclude with the following inferences:  
First; Great is the happiness of true religion.

“ Blessed

“ Blessed are the people whose God is the  
 “ Lord. They dwell in safety under the sha-  
 “ dow of the Almighty. Their life is now  
 “ hid with Christ in God, and they are  
 “ kept by the power of God, through faith,  
 “ unto eternal salvation.”

Secondly. Much is contained in being a  
 Christian “ indeed and in truth.” And there  
 is no small reason to fear, that multitudes are  
 deceiving themselves with an empty profession.  
 Oh! how possible is it, for men to have *a*  
*name to live*, when in God’s account, *they*  
*are dead\**.

Finally. If so much faithfulness, watch-  
 fulness and care is required on the side of man,  
 what will be the punishment of those who  
 readily comply with every temptation, and  
 even tempt themselves and their companions  
 to sin against God? May the Lord open all  
 our eyes, and turn our hearts to himself,  
 through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

\* Rev. iii. 1.

L E C T U R E    X I.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

**R**ICHES and honours, power and influence, generally weigh much with men. But unhappily for them, most men fix their attention and set their hearts only upon the riches and honours of this world. For the *true riches* they have very little desire, nor can they be satisfied with “the honour which cometh “from God only.”

This is the sad effect of our fall from innocence. When man forsook God, he was no longer heavenly and spiritual in his mind and dispositions, but immediately became earthly and sensual. And from that time, earthly grandeur and sensual gratifications have been his delight. But whatever may be the rage  
of

of man for mortal distinctions and momentary greatness and glory, all true greatness and glory belong to God, to whom we are all reverently taught to say, in the words of our text, *Thine is the kingdom.*

Here we are led to consider God as a King. As a great King. As "the King of kings and Lord of lords." As that King to whom properly and emphatically belongs THE KINGDOM. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, "and his kingdom without end."

"David blessed the LORD before all the  
"congregation; and David said, Blessed be  
"thou, LORD God of Israel our Father, for  
"ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the  
"greatness, and the power, and the glory, and  
"the victory, and the majesty: for all that is  
"in the heaven and in the earth, is thine;  
"thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou  
"art exalted as Head above all. Both riches  
"and honour come of thee, and thou reignest  
"over all, and in thine hand is power and  
"might; and in thine hand it is to make  
"great, and to give strength unto all. Now  
Q 4 "therefore



“ therefore, our God, we thank thee, and  
“ praise thy glorious name\*.”

In discoursing from our text, I shall

I. Attempt to shew what kind of a king  
our God is. And

II. Endeavour to shew, in a few particulars,  
what he has a right to expect from his subjects.

I. I will attempt to shew, what kind of a  
king it is with whom we have now to do, and  
into whose august presence we must, sooner  
or later, all enter.

And, in the first place, God our king, is a  
rightful and lawful sovereign. His kingdom  
is founded in truth, in reality, and in propriety.  
He to whom kingly authority is ascribed in  
the text—He to whom it is said, *Thine is the  
kingdom*, has a natural and an unalienable right  
to universal rule. He is the Creator of Heaven  
and Earth; of Angels and of Men. He gave  
birth to the Universe, and life to all that move

\* 1 Chron. xxix. 10, &c.

in it. The Sun, Moon and Stars, Principalities and Powers, things visible and invisible, are all indebted to him for existence.

And as all things by him exist, so do all things by him subsist. Every creature is under the notice of his eye, supported by his hand and subject to his will. All the beings that he hath created, from the highest Archangel to the meanest insect in dust, are upheld by him in their respective situations; some of them the care of his parental heart, and others the objects of his avenging rod. His government extends from creature to creature, from world to world, from system to system, from time to eternity, and “from everlasting to everlasting;” it is without end, and without intermission.

Nothing, surely, can be more reasonable or more just, than that HE who made all worlds and all beings, should rule and govern all.—To rule indeed must be the prerogative of HIM who created all that is ruled. Therefore we say, he is, in the highest sense of the word, a lawful Sovereign. He is the One, great, absolute, universal, and irresistible, Monarch; “the  
“ King

“ King eternal and immortal,” to whom may justly and emphatically be ascribed, *the Kingdom*.

And as God is a lawful, so is he a *kind* king. ‘ His heart is full of tenderness, and his bowels ‘ melt with love.’ In heaven this is more conspicuous than on earth. For heaven is all obedience to God’s blessed will. There is not, in all that happy world, one disaffected subject, one rebellious spirit, one reluctant or cheerless worshipper. There, all hearts flame with zeal, all lips burst forth in praises, and all powers delight in duty and in love.

On earth it is far otherwise. This world has rebelled against its rightful Lord, and in a thousand different ways has said, it “ would “ not have him to reign over it.” The inhabitants in general have “ forsaken the right “ way, and have gone astray,” awfully departing from their God. Yea, they have to a man “ broken the yoke and burst the bonds,” determined to “ walk in the way of their own “ heart, and in the sight of their own eyes,” most daringly saying, “ our lips,” and all our faculties

faculties “are our own, who is lord over us?” Thus “all have sinned, and come short of the “glory of God: and there is none that by “nature doeth good, no, not one\*.”

And what has God, our King, done? He might indeed have “stirred up his great wrath,” come forth against us “in his hot displeasure,” and have “miserably destroyed” such miserable offenders. But this he hath not done. He hath borne with the manners of this guilty world several thousand years. His patience is renewed every day. He still bears with us. He is “long-suffering towards us, not willing “that we should perish, but come to repentance†.” He gives us the blessings of this life, that we may improve them to the interest of a better. He calls to us in our sinful courses, and would have us pause and reflect; consider and return. “O that my people were wise; “O that they would consider‡,” is his compassionate language. Yea, he even expostulates with us, and tenderly says, “why will “ye die?”

\* Psal. xiv. 2, 3.      Rom. iii. 12, &c.      † 2 Pet. iii. 9.  
‡ Deut. xxxii. 29.



In heaven, as all creatures are filled with love and duty, *there* is nothing to be seen which looks like a mark of displeasure. But on earth sorrows abound. And yet even in those providences which occasion sorrow, there is mercy mixed with judgment. Trials and afflictions of the forest kind, are not seldom intended to reduce rebellious subjects to a right mind, and from thence to willing obedience. This leads me to observe

That God, our King, is merciful. The mercies of God are over all his works. But the height of mercy is perceived in his dealings with the children of men. To create the human race, especially in such circumstances as they were created, was a high act of goodness. To feed and support them was an addition to that goodness. But to seek them when they were lost ; to enlighten them when they were sunk in darkness ; to purify them when they were defiled and polluted ; to raise them to honour when they were plunged in disgrace ; to save them when they were in themselves destroyed ; to redeem them when they were carried captive, bound, imprisoned, and enslaved ;

flaved ; to enrich them when they were poor ; to ennoble them when they were mean, and to blefs them when they had curfed themselves ; and to do all this in the manner in which it *was* done, even by God's " giving up his own " Son" to humility, reproach, sufferings, and death, this is mercy all mercy beyond ; such as exceeds comprehension, beggars all description, and even non-plusés imagination. Those who understand most of it, are lost as it were in wonder, love, and praise ; and exclaim with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, " O the " depth of the riches both of the wisdom and " knowledge of God ! Of his *mercy* he saved " us, by the washing of regeneration, and " renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed " on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our " Saviour\*." And with the apostle John, " Herein is love, not that we loved God, but " that he loved us, and sent his Son, to be " the propitiation for our sins†.

And as God, our king, is merciful in himself, so is he mild in his government. " His " yoke is easy, and his burden light." He

\* Rom. xi. 33. Titus iii. 5. 6.      † 1 John iv. 10.

rules with a gentle hand, and frames his laws upon principles of lenity. There is nothing in him harsh or severe. He does not require us to “make brick without straw,” and will “not lay upon us any other burden than he will enable us to bear.” He is pleased to see his people happy: not in a state of thoughtlessness and folly, dissipation and vanity; but in a way of seriousness and love, obedience and humility. Indeed, his people, in scriptural language, are a *holy* people; enlightened from above, redeemed by Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; sincerely devoted to God, to his service, and his honour, in heart and life. Such are properly *the people of God*. And their king delights to see them happy. He treats them not so much like subjects and servants, as like children and friends. He comforts them when they are in trouble; relieves them when they are oppressed; delivers them when they are endangered; and refreshes, cheers, and strengthens them when they wax feeble and are ready to faint.

And even with respect to the wicked, so good is God our king, that he allows them to  
share

share in the mildness of his present government. Though he sometimes inflicts temporal punishments on persons of this description, yet it must be acknowledged, that he punisheth them far *less than their iniquities deserve*. Further it must be remarked,

That our God is a *condescending* king. It is esteemed a condescension in earthly monarchs to admit their subjects to free converse with them. Much greater would be esteemed the condescension, should one of the kings of the earth stoop to enter the cottages of the poor, and visit some of the meanest of his subjects. But what are earthly kings? They are our fellow-worms, feeble flesh and blood, subject to sickness, pain, and death, like ourselves. Their superiority over us, is not a superiority of *nature*, but a superiority of *station* and *influence*.

But the great God infinitely exceeds, not only the highest creature on earth, but also the noblest creatures, the brightest intelligences of heaven. In HIM all excellencies meet, and all perfections centre.

And



And yet, astonishing to consider, he humbleth himself to take kind notice of the meanest subject he hath on earth. He not only permits, but graciously invites, all his servants to free and frequent converse with him. He calls them to his feet, commands them to approach him in the faith and name of his dear Son, and assures them they shall have a gracious hearing. He requires them to unbosom themselves before him; and to mention all their fears, to name their various doubts, to express all their desires, to reveal all their sorrows, and to “cast their burdens upon the “Lord,” with a firm trust that “he will “sustain them.” They are to be anxiously “careful for nothing; but in every thing by “prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, “to make known their requests unto God\*.” And in all their difficulties and distresses, they are to comfort themselves with this consideration, that “the Lord is at hand.”

This observation leads me to remark further, that the Lord condescends to visit his people in the dwellings of poverty, meanness,

\* Phil. iv. 6.

and

and humility. "For thus saith the high and  
 "lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose  
 "name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy  
 "place; with him also that is of a contrite  
 "and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of  
 "the humble, and to revive the heart of the  
 "contrite ones\*." And there is no doubt  
 but he dwelled with the poor and humble  
 Lazarus, when he lay at the rich man's gate,  
 full of sores, and in want of crumbs. O! that  
 he may dwell in all our houses, and in each of  
 our hearts, by his grace, his spirit and his love!

Our God is further a *just* and *faithful* king.  
 His Kingdom, his Throne and his Government  
 are "established in Righteousness." It is true,  
 his providence has a dark side. There are  
 depths in it which no created understanding  
 can fathom. Some of his ways "are far above  
 "out of our reach." They "are high, we  
 "cannot attain unto them. Such knowledge  
 "is too wonderful for us," and was never  
 designed to be our portion in the present state.  
 Some dispensations are so strange and unaccount-  
 able, that feeble faith is staggered by them,

\* Isai. lvii. 15.

human pride spurns at them, and nothing but humility can patiently and quietly acquiesce in them.

Nevertheless, there is reason to rejoice that “the Lord reigneth;” for when “clouds and “darkness are round about him,” we are still assured, that “righteousness and judgment are “the habitation of his throne\*.” “His righteousness is like the great mountains, when “his judgments are a great deep†.” His faithfulness at all times reacheth unto the clouds, and mercy and truth constantly go before his face. We are, indeed, not seldom induced to say, “Verily, thou art a God that “hidest thyself‡:” but justice requires us immediately to add, “Thou art, at the same “time, the Hope of Israel, the hope of thy “kingdom, the Saviour thereof in trouble.”— “Israel shall yet be saved,” says the believing soul, “Israel shall yet be saved in the Lord, “with an everlasting salvation§:” thy servants, God of truth, “shall not be ashamed nor “confounded, world without end.”

\* Psal. xcvi. 2.      † Psal. xxxvi. 6.      ‡ Isai. xlv. 15.  
§ Isai. xlv. 17.

I repeat

I repeat it, God is a just and faithful king. He breaks no promises. He makes no unrighteous wars. He takes no advantages. He oppresses no subject. He refuses no proper petitions. He is no unjust respecter of persons, but hears the lowest as readily as the highest—regards equity in all his dealings, punctuality in all his proceedings, and goodness in all his actions. His laws admit of no imperfection. They are all *holy, just and good*. In a word, to a discerning and gracious eye, this inscription is visible throughout the extensive kingdom of our ever-blessed and all-righteous Sovereign—  
 “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord  
 “God Almighty; just and true are thy ways,  
 “thou King of Saints\*.”

Moreover; Our God is a *bountiful* king. His gifts are numerous. His bounties are large and free. The whole creation is his Pensioner, and the highest and proudest creatures in it live upon alms. “The king himself is served by the field,” and the field is dependent on its God. The young ravens

\* Rev. xv. 3.



that cry, the fowls that fly in the open expanse of heaven, and the cattle which feed upon a thousand hills, all look to him, and are filled. “ He covereth the heavens with clouds. He “ prepareth rain for the earth. He maketh grass “ to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to “ the beast his food. The eyes of all wait “ upon thee, O God, and thou givest them “ their meat in due season. Thou openest “ thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every “ living thing. The Lord is righteous in all “ his ways, and holy in all his works. He “ will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.”

“ The Lord is good, and doth good ;” he is good to all ; but he is in an especial manner “ good to Israel ;” that is, “ to such as are of a “ *clean heart* ;” to them that love and fear his name. His children are fed from his fatherly hand, and comforted by his parental smiles. Whether he gives them little or much of this world’s goods, he gives his blessing with it. He is still the bountiful God. For all that he gives, he gives in covenant-love. His people experience the reality, and enjoy the felicity, of this sweet truth—“ The blessing of “ the

“ the Lord, *it* maketh rich, and he addeth no  
 “ sorrow with it\*.”

The Lord has no where, in his gospel, promised his people abundance of earthly treasure: and it must be allowed, he seldom gives it them. But though he denies them this, he bestows on them what is far better. A richer and nobler treasure marks his kindness to them. He freely bestows on them his dearly beloved Son. He enricheth them with his Holy Spirit. And to complete the bounty, he gives them his glorious and gracious Self. The happy consequence is, that, though they may be outwardly poor and mean, they are inwardly rich and noble. “ The king’s daughter is all  
 “ glorious within†.” The disciples of Jesus are clothed with “ the robes of righteousness,” and adorned with “ the garments of salvation.” They are “ clothed with humility,” and blessed with peace. “ Being justified by faith, they  
 “ have peace with God, through our Lord  
 “ Jesus Christ‡.” They have, indeed, what infinitely exceeds all mortal distinctions, and

\* Prov. x. 22.

† Psal. xlv. 13.

‡ Rom. v. 1.

casts a shade over all earthly glory ; and that is, “ the peace of God which passeth all understanding\*.”

Among the wicked, in the present life, “ the King, the Lord of Hosts,” doth not “ leave himself without witness” of his liberality. To them he manifests his royal bounty in giving them “ seed-time and harvest, summer and winter ;” the influences of the heavens, and *fruitful seasons*. For he “ maketh “ his sun to rise on the evil as well as on “ the good ; and sendeth rain on the unjust as “ plentifully as on the just.” But his beneficence ceases not here. To the impenitent and disobedient he also affords the means of grace. He sends them his word, and, by the lips of his ministers, preaches to them the doctrine of *reconciliation*, pardon, peace, and eternal life, through the blood of Jesus Christ, his once crucified, but now exalted and glorified, Son. I call you to record, Sinners, I appeal to your consciences, that this doctrine, this Gospel of divine grace and goodness, is

\* Phil. iv. 7.

preached to you continually. See that you slight it not; but be seriously concerned to obtain all the rich blessings it proposes. Then you will be rich indeed. This leads me to mention

The peculiar privileges of true Christians as they are briefly stated by St. Paul, and which tend to give the mind an illustrious idea of God's bounty to his faithful subjects. So great is it, that it seems to admit of no bounds. How pleasing to hear an Apostle saying unto Christians—The preachers of the Gospel “are yours;” “the world is yours\*,” that is, all is sanctified to you for good; and in this sense, “life is yours; death is yours; things present are yours; things to come are yours:” and, to carry the divine generosity to the highest pitch, I must tell you, that *all* things are *yours*, for “ye are Christ’s.”

It appears then, that the Sovereign of the Universe is bountiful, and that he is every way worthy of the kingdom of nature. Saints

\* 1 Cor. iii. 22, &c.



and finners hourly share in his general gifts on earth. 'But the wide difference that remains, 'is endless bliss or endless woe.' He will vindicate his righteous laws at last, and punish every obstinate offender. But he will crown all his kindnesses begun to his obedient people in this world, with "glory, honour, immortality and eternal life," in the next.

It seems almost needless now to attempt to shew, in the Second Place, what this great and good King has a right to expect of all his subjects. I am sure that the proofs of God's rectitude, justice, holiness, goodness, truth and mercy, as a King and Governor, must carry their own conviction with them; and you must be assured, in the first place, that it is the duty of all men to *love* God. He has the most absolute and undoubted right to our best affections. He ought to be supreme in our judgment, understanding and desires. We ought to "love the Lord our God with "all our heart, with all our soul, with all our "mind, and with all our strength." Enquire, my dear hearers, whether this be the case with you. If it is, you certainly are careful to  
please

please your heavenly Sovereign, by departing from all known transgression of his laws. This is the unalterable rule laid down in scripture, "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil\*."

Some of you, I trust, are happily delivered from the tyranny of evil passions and tempers. You love God, and work righteousness. Your conquest over sin, though not complete, is still carrying on, and proceeding towards perfection. You wish to see all men *spiritually minded*, like yourselves. But although in this benevolent wish you are not gratified; yet you cannot fail to take a pleasure in the *sobriety* of others around you. If the *kingdom* of God prosper, and the kingdom of Satan in any measure weaken and decline, in this you must rejoice. And though there undoubtedly are some whose conduct every good man must wish altered for the better; yet I hope that iniquity does not flourish so much in this Town, as in many others. Righteousness, it must be confessed, is here far from having attained its highest point, and great advances remain still to be made; but it affords me very

\* Psal. xcvi. 10.

considerable satisfaction to say, that a certain soberness of manners and propriety of conduct prevail here, which I believe we should in vain look for in some other places\*. Let me intreat all present to aim at greater degrees of goodness, and let your only contention be with your neighbours, who among you shall love God most and serve him best. For in an emulation of this kind, I am sure you must “have love among yourselves,” and the end will be both profitable and honourable to your immortal souls. “Let us consider one another,” says St. Paul, “to provoke unto love, and to good works†.”

In the second place, I remark, That our God and King deserves to be universally *feared* and *reverenced*. “Who shall not fear

\* The author feels a peculiar pleasure in being able to bear this public testimony in favour of the Town in which he lives ; the *general* decency and good order of which, since he has known it, reflect high honour on the major part of its inhabitants, and form at the same time the best eulogy on the mingled vigilance and prudence of the Respectable Magistrates by whom it has been governed : to whom, and to every individual in the place, the writer of this sincerely wishes every blessing for Time and for Eternity.

† Heb. x. 24.

“thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy\*.” Our God is meekly to be feared, but not slavishly dreaded. For though he is a King, he is not a Tyrant. You have heard something, though the thousandth part hath not been told you, of his meekness as well as his majesty; of his goodness as well as his greatness, and from all accounts it is evident, that his mercy is equal to his justice. Let us then fear God with an awe mixed with humble love and holy confidence; and whilst we partake freely of his bounties, and talk of his compassions, let us reverence and “sanctify the Lord God in our hearts.”

In the third place, Our heavenly King has a right to *honour* from his subjects. Honour is due from mortals to mortals, according as their stations in life differ. And we are required to pay “honour where honour is due:” particularly we are commanded to “honour the king;” the king whom Providence sets over us in the present state. And if honour

\* Rev. xv. 4.



is due to a *mortal* king, to a king who “is but  
 “of yesterday,” and “whose foundation is in  
 “the dust ;” what superlative, what sublime  
 honours are due, to “the king eternal, im-  
 “mortal and invifible ; to the only wife God,  
 “who is blessed for evermore.” Let us  
 honour him then in our thoughts, in our  
 words, and above all in our actions.

This leads me to remark, in the fourth  
 place, That our everlasting king has a right  
 to our *perpetual services*. We should worship  
 the Lord our God in spirit and in truth, and  
 him only should we serve. “Other lords,”  
 alas, “have had dominion over us,” and we  
 have too often “served divers lusts and plea-  
 “sures :” but let shame and remorse succeed  
 to all our unholy delights, and from this time  
 let us serve God, “in holiness and righteouf-  
 “ness before him, all the” remaining “days  
 “of our life.”

God, our righteous Sovereign, hath, in the  
 fifth place, a right to the most unreserved and  
 unlimited trust and confidence. “He doth  
 “all things well.” He rules and reigns for  
 the

the good of his people, as well as for his own honour. He has wisdom to guide, power to protect, and goodness to crown, all his undertakings ; and nothing that he plans for the welfare of his subjects can miscarry. In vain is any weapon formed against them who take shelter “ beneath the shadow of his wings.” All the malice of earth shall be unable to pluck them from his hands, nor shall the gates of hell prevail. This God, then, is to be trusted with our bodies, with our souls, with our circumstances, with our families, with our friends, with our country, with our church, and our religion. He is, in one word, through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to his Gospel, to be trusted with every thing that relates to the Vast Kingdom over which he is Supreme, and with all affairs universally, temporal, spiritual and eternal.

To conclude. Great must be the happiness to be a favourite of this great King. And who are the people whom we may safely pronounce his favourites ? I answer, according to the scriptures, those only are allowed to look upon themselves as such, in whose *hearts* he *reigns*  
by

by his *grace*. And those in whose hearts he reigns by his grace, will in their lives endeavour to obey his will. “Ye are my Friends,” said Christ, “if ye do whatsoever I command “you\*.” O! that this God may reign for ever in our souls, and bring all the powers of our minds into subjection to his law. If we are the willing, faithful servants of the Lord Almighty here, we shall be made “kings and “priests unto God and the Father†” hereafter. We shall be honoured with a crown that will never fade, and be enriched with a kingdom that never can be moved.

But oh! reflect, how tremendous will be the final doom of every rebellious creature; of every unconverted sinner! Those who now slight Christ, who now refuse his grace, who now “grieve his Holy Spirit,” and who desire not holiness of *heart* and *life*, have nothing to expect, but “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish‡,” from the KING whose name is HOLY.

\* John xv. 14.    † Rev. i. 6.    ‡ Rom. ii. 8, &c.

## LECTURE XII.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

THINE IS THE POWER.

“**G**OD hath spoken once ; twice have I  
 “ heard this, that power belongeth  
 “ unto God\*.” To him therefore doth the  
 text most properly as well as emphatically  
 ascribe it.

In treating this passage, I feel my utter inability to do it justice. Its sublimity far exceeds the utmost stretch of my very limited understanding. Yea, I suppose that the combined wisdom and eloquence of an Arch-angel would fall greatly short upon this Vast subject, and leave us much in the dark, as to its extent. It seems reasonable to imagine, that HE alone to whom it is said, *Thine is the power*, fully

\* Psal. lxii. 11.



comprehends the import of the words. Something, however, of the power of God is known by mortals ; and as they are taught to address these expressions to their heavenly Father, it is right and needful that they should be able to annex to them some clear and determinate ideas. With a humble dependence therefore on divine assistance, let us attempt to unfold a few of the things which are contained in the words of the text, and in some measure levelled to our understanding.

Though in treating this subject one might multiply particulars almost without end, yet I think the whole of what it is needful to say on it, will naturally fall under one or other of the following heads :

Creation ; Preservation ; Redemption ; Punishment ; and Reward.—First ; Our text ascribes power to God, as Creator.

This earth, to them that know it best, appears a world of wonders. The philosophically contemplative mind acknowledges it to bear the evident marks of wisdom, power, and

and goodness. When abstractedly considered, it is viewed as vast and important. Its variety, beauty and magnitude are such as inspire with high ideas of its great Creator. But when we lift our eyes to the heavens, and behold the sun, moon and stars which God hath created ; when we contemplate that glorious luminary which dispenses light, life and heat to this distant world ; and when we know and consider his dimensions, and the surprising bodies, in the midst of which he acts as the living soul, we then see this, otherwise, vast globe, dwindle to a point.

But when we raise our views higher, our admiration rises with the sight. What wonderful scenes, what astonishing displays of power, open upon the prying and assisted eye ! There you may perceive world on world, system as it were involved in system, without number, and without end. What is discoverable and actually discovered by man, in this dark and distant state, is truly amazing : but who can tell what works of wonder more exist in the immensity of God ! Those bodies which have been seen and examined are

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vast

vaſt almoſt beyond conception, and yet all move by ſuch exact laws and in ſuch nice order, that by their immenſe bulk and exquisite regularity, they all in their ſmooth and conſtant courſes, ſweetly, though loudly declare—

‘ The Hand that form’d us is divine\*.’

Such is the diſtance of ſome of the ſtars from our earth, that we are told, ‘ A ſound  
‘ would not arrive to us from them in fifty  
‘ thouſand years. And a cannon ball flying at  
‘ the rate of four hundred and eighty miles an  
‘ hour, would not reach us in ſeven hundred  
‘ thouſand years†.’ ‘ The ſtars,’ ſays the author referred to above, ‘ ſhine with their  
‘ own native and unborrowed luſtre, as the  
‘ ſun does; and ſince each particular ſtar, as  
‘ well as the ſun, is confined to a particular  
‘ portion of ſpace, it is plain that the ſtars are  
‘ of the ſame nature with the ſun.’

\* It would neither be convenient nor proper to enter far into this ſubject here; but the learned reader well knows, not only that great diſcoveries have been made in the planetary ſyſtem by teleſcopic aſſiſtance, but alſo that our progreſs in this kind of diſcovery keeps pace with our improvement in optics.

† Guthrie’s Gram. Introd.

‘ Who-

‘Whoever imagines, that they were created  
 ‘only to give a faint, glimmering light to the  
 ‘inhabitants of this globe, must have a very  
 ‘superficial knowledge of astronomy, and a  
 ‘mean opinion of the Divine Wisdom; since,  
 ‘by an infinitely less exertion of creating power,  
 ‘the Deity could have given our earth much  
 ‘more light by one single additional moon.  
 ‘Instead then,’ adds this writer, ‘of one sun  
 ‘and one world only in the universe, as the  
 ‘unskilful in astronomy imagine, *that* science  
 ‘discovers to us such an inconceivable number  
 ‘of suns, systems, and worlds, dispersed through  
 ‘boundless space, that if our sun, with all the  
 ‘planets, moons, and comets belonging to it,  
 ‘were annihilated, they would be no more  
 ‘missed by an eye that could take in the whole  
 ‘creation, than a grain of sand from the sea  
 ‘shore; the space they possess being compa-  
 ‘ratively so small, that it would scarcely be a  
 ‘sensible blank in the universe.’

‘What an august! what an amazing con-  
 ‘ception, if human imagination can conceive  
 ‘it, does this give of the works of the Creator!  
 ‘Thousands of thousands of suns, multiplied  
 S 2 ‘without



‘ without end, and ranged all around us, at  
 ‘ immense distances from each other, attended  
 ‘ by ten thousand times ten thousand worlds,  
 ‘ all in rapid motion, yet calm, regular, and  
 ‘ harmonious, invariably keeping the paths  
 ‘ prescribed them ; and these worlds peopled  
 ‘ with myriads of intelligent beings formed  
 ‘ for endless progression in perfection, and  
 ‘ felicity !’

But what is my intention in setting before you these things ? Is it done merely to amuse the curious, or to excite the admiration of the ignorant ? Far from me be the unworthy and contemptible motive. It is utterly beneath the man who has the slightest acquaintance with his own insignificancy, and his guilt as a sinner. I call your consciences to witness for me, that I seldom amuse, or attempt to amuse, you from the pulpit. This, in an especial manner, is the place of seriousness and solemnity.

What then may be supposed to have been my views in introducing, at this time, the things you have just heard ? I answer, my design

design was to help us the better to understand our text. To give us juster apprehensions of Almighty God, and to assist us to say to him in a more intelligent manner—*Thine is the power*. And that, looking round on the creation, we may be enabled, with suitable sentiments and dispositions, to exclaim—

‘ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
 ‘ Almighty, thine this universal frame,  
 ‘ Thus wond’rous fair ; thyself how wond’rous then !  
 ‘ Unspeakable, who sit’st above these heavens  
 ‘ To us invisible, or dimly seen  
 ‘ In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare  
 ‘ Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow’r divine.’

‘ If so much power, wisdom, goodness and  
 ‘ magnificence be displayed in the material  
 ‘ creation, which is the least considerable part  
 ‘ of the universe, how great, how wise, how  
 ‘ good, must HE be, who made and governs  
 ‘ the whole\*.’ And how are we filled with  
 wonder, and lost as it were in holy astonishment,  
 when we consider the scriptural account of the  
 creation ! What vast and unutterable ideas  
 does it give of the infinite Creator ! “ God  
 “ said, Let there be light, and there was

\* Guthrie.

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“ light.

“light. By the word of the Lord were the  
 “heavens made: and all the host of them  
 “by the breath of his mouth. For he spake,  
 “and it was done: he commanded, and it  
 “stood fast!”

Next; To God must be ascribed the power  
 of *preserving* the worlds and beings he hath  
 created. This preserving power consists of two  
 parts, or comprehends two objects; Order and  
 Existence. Incessant motion seems to prevail  
 throughout the universe; so that there is,  
 perhaps, scarcely such a thing as absolute rest  
 in nature. The earth on which we dwell,  
 together with all the heavenly bodies, are  
 continually performing their respective revolutions.  
 And yet we perceive no clashing,  
 no jarring, no dangerous interferences, among  
 them: but the strictest regularity and consummate  
 harmony prevail throughout the whole.  
 Whence can this possibly proceed, but from  
 the mighty power of God; which power is  
 perpetually employed in this beneficial work.  
 This is the omnipotent chain by which all  
 the various parts of the creation are held fast  
 in their proper stations. And were it not  
 for

for this, it might be expected that general confusion, wide-spreading ruin, and universal destruction, would take place.

Much the same may be said of the existence of all created things. Life, or existence, given, can be preserved only by him who gave it. Therefore St. Paul emphatically declares, that God, who made the world, and giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, is “not far from every one of us : For in Him we live, “move, and have our being\*.” That is, we are dependent on him every moment, and every moment are supported and preserved by him. So that were it not for the power of God, if not upheld by his almighty hand, we should sink back to our original nothing, and all things would return to a state of non-entity; that is, they would lose their very beings.—Thine therefore, O God, is the *power* ; with thee is all power, and without thee, all nature would be seized with fainting, trembling, sickness and death. Perhaps this is the sense in which Christ is to be understood, when

\* Acts xvii. 27, 28.



he said to the Jews, "My Father worketh  
"hitherto, and I work\*."

Power is also to be ascribed to God, as Redeemer. And here I shall enter into particulars, and shew in a few special instances how the power of God hath been, and still is, exercised in redemption. And I am ready to suppose this part of my subject will be much more agreeable to serious minds, than those which have been already considered.

In the first place then, The power of God was eminently displayed in the propagation and establishment of the gospel.

Before the coming of Christ, learning had revived. Among the Greeks, arts and sciences were improved and flourished; and refinement of views, with politeness of manners, were carried to a considerable height. Notwithstanding this, in a spiritual sense it may truly be said, that darkness had overspread the earth. "The world by wisdom knew not God†."

\* John v. 17.

† 1 Cor. i. 21.

Christ came a light into this world. But St. John tells us, that when the “light shined in “darkness, the darkness comprehended it “not.” Christ the Saviour, was generally rejected. “He was in the world, and the world “was made by him, and the world knew him “not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. Men loved darkness rather “than light, because their deeds were evil\*.”

Christ and his gospel met with opposition. Both Jews and Gentiles, armed with prejudices and strengthened by numbers, were “found to “fight against God.” The Jews seem to have expected that the Messiah would come in great state, with the alluring ensigns of worldly pomp and grandeur. They apprehended that he would be a mighty man of war, and an illustrious conqueror. They hoped that he would subdue nations great and powerful, and once more restore the kingdom unto Israel.

But when Jesus appeared, he was meek and lowly ; mild and peaceful. Instead of being

\* John i.

the warlike hero expected, he was “ the Prince  
 “ of Peace.” Instead of conquering by the  
 sword, he would not suffer it to be drawn ;  
 or when drawn, remanded it with reproof to its  
 peaceful scabbard\*. Yea, so far was he from  
 answering the false expectations of the Jews,  
 so far was he from feeding their pride and flat-  
 tering their prejudices, that he delivered doc-  
 trines and inculcated precepts diametrically  
 opposite to both. He taught the doctrines of  
 godlike charity and universal good will. He  
 commanded his followers to cultivate the ami-  
 able virtues of meekness and forbearance, and  
 to rest in nothing short of the sublime graces of  
 pure compassion and free forgiveness.—So far  
 from being allowed to resist, when smitten on  
 the one cheek, they were to turn the other also;  
 and if sued at the law, and by that means de-  
 prived of their coat, they were to give up  
 their cloak also†. They were to render railing  
 for railing unto no man, but contrariwise a  
 blessing. So far from being hot and revenge-  
 ful, they were to love their enemies, to bless  
 the persons that cursed them, to do good to

\* Matt. xxvi. 52.

† See Matt. v.

such as hated them, and to pray for those who despitefully used, and persecuted them ; and in a word, they were continually to take up their cross and deny themselves, otherwise, Christ expressly told them, they could not be his disciples. I hope we have not forgotten, that these doctrines and precepts are still in force, and that Jesus who now sits on the right-hand of God, is every week and every day, by his blessed word, preaching them with great solemnity to our eyes, or our ears, and we should never be satisfied till they are deeply impressed on our hearts. These things, however, did not suit the taste nor meet the views of the Jewish people. And with a high mixture of anger and arrogance, they rejected the heavenly Teacher, and spurned at his gracious lessons.

The Greeks, on the other hand, overrating their worldly wisdom, being “puffed up in their fleshly minds,” they must try every thing by the maxims of their philosophy : and whatsoever would not bend to their preconceived notions of wisdom, was, without scruple, condemned by them as folly. Upon this principle every doctrine which exceeded their comprehension,



hension, however honourable to God and safe for man, must submit to the degrading appellation of *foolishness*. Under this reproach fell, most peculiarly, the doctrine of the cross. Overlooking the dignity of the sufferer, and, for want of spiritual discernment, not perceiving how God either would or could cause life to spring from death itself, they thought that Redemption offered them through one who was himself a captive of the king of terrors, was a proposition fit only to be treated with contempt. Accordingly, their pride rejected the Saviour, and disdained his proposed salvation. Thus "Christ crucified, was unto "the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the "Greeks foolishness."

Thus the case once stood with the blessed Redeemer, and the great body of the people. A few individuals believed, but the world in general remained faithless. Deaf to the voice of truth, unmoved, or unrighteously moved, at the sight of miracles and unexampled deeds, blind to real interest, steeled against conviction, or which perhaps, was much worse, unfaithful to convictions received, mankind despised the  
goodness

goodness of the Lord, trampled under foot the olive branch of peace, fullenly rejected the glad tidings from heaven, thrust from them the only Saviour, hated his pure and amiable religion, persecuted his few faithful followers, and, in the wickedness of their hearts, would gladly have rooted them and their Master's doctrine from the earth.

And what prevented? When this question is asked, with duty, with zeal, with pleasure and with triumph, I would adopt the words of my text, and gratefully addressing myself to the high God, devoutly say—*Thine is the power.*

“Why did the heathen rage, and the people  
 “imagine a vain thing? The kings of the  
 “earth set themselves, and the rulers took  
 “counsel together, against the LORD, and  
 “against his anointed, saying, Let us break  
 “their bands asunder, and cast away their  
 “cords from us.—He that sitteth in the hea-  
 “vens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them  
 “in derision. Thou shalt break them with  
 “a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces  
 “like a potter's vessel. Thou hast set thy  
 “king,

“ king, O God, upon thy holy hill of Zion\*.”  
 Thou hast established thy despised gospel in the world. Thou hast built thy persecuted church upon an immoveable rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. *Thine*, therefore, *is the power*, and to thee shall every human and angelic tongue confess the glorious truth.

The power of God would appear still more conspicuous and illustrious, were we to consider how many, how mighty, how wealthy, and how active, were the opposers of Christianity in its infant state; and also, how few, how feeble, how disproportioned, were the visible means of its propagation, and how extremely unequal to the event.—These are points on which my limits will not allow me to enlarge. I hope enough has already been said on this article, to convince us, that nothing short of the mighty power of God could erect and establish the kingdom of God, *even where Satan's seat was*. This, then, is the first instance, I apprehend, in which *power* is to be ascribed to God, as it regards the gospel.

\* Psal. ii.

The next I shall name, is the power by which this gospel is applied to the hearts of them who truly believe. These are distinct things. For opposition to a measure may gradually die away, and it may be suffered to take its course, without having the hearty approbation, much less the sincere love, of those who cease to resist. Moreover, the temper, the very genius, of the times may change. Things may put on a new face, and that which was once thought disagreeable and forbidding, may appear pleasing and inviting; and then no wonder if it is courted and caressed. Or, which is much nearer the case in the present instance, in the revolutions of human affairs, that which has been despised for its own sake, may, in time, be sought and embraced for the sake of something else.

Every one versed in history, knows this to be true of Christianity. When the religion of Jesus was publicly avowed and zealously supported by a rich and powerful Emperor, then numerous were its advocates and many its professed friends. When an alliance was  
formed



formed between *that* and the State, multitudes, who might otherwise have been its avowed enemies, were happy in *calling* it the darling of their bosoms. But that the affections of some who professed regard, were not pure and regular, was abundantly evinced by the many base prostitutions which followed. And in this let all the children of God glory, that HE to whom POWER is ascribed, needed not the poor assistance of kings nor emperors to preserve his holy religion in the world; as is evident by His keeping it alive amidst fire and sword, and in causing it to grow and prosper, when carnal magistrates and worldly priests sought to destroy it. Or, to change the metaphor, how little God needed the aid of the mighty to preserve his religion, is seen in his causing it to burn high and shine gloriously, when in the deep and wide sea of persecution. No waters of affliction could drown it; no waves of trouble bury it. This I call God's maintaining and preserving it against external opposition. But wonderful also is the divine power in maintaining it against internal opposition, and making it victorious over all the corruption of the human heart.

Thanks

Thanks to God, there have been, in every age of the christian dispensation, eminent instances of this. The present is not destitute of them. I hope that some of us are living witnesses of this truth. We have had, I trust, the gospel of Jesus, in all its divine energy, impressed upon our hearts and our consciences; "turning us away from our iniquities," and assisting us to "serve the living God." I hope we can say with the apostle, that though "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness;" yet "unto us which are saved, it is the power of God;" and with gratitude echo back this sound, "Christ crucified is, unto them which are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—The power of God is seen in wresting the prey from the hands of Satan. "When the strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when" the God of salvation, who is "stronger than he, cometh upon him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils\*."

\* Luke xi. 21, 22.

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Once more. Power must be ascribed unto God, as Redeemer, because he will raise the dead. This he hath assured us he will do. These vile bodies of our's, should we be so happy as to live and die in faith and obedience, will be raised by the great Saviour, and "fashioned like unto his glorious body," by that mighty power of his, "whereby he is "able even to subdue all things unto himself." The body that hath been faithfully devoted to the service of God, is, at death, "sown in "corruption," but it will be "raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised "in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised "in power\*." All the faithful in Jesus shall be brought forth to honour and happiness ; and by an act of the same power the wicked also shall be made to arise : but it will be to *shame and everlasting contempt*†. This leads me to remark,

. That power must be ascribed unto God, as Punisher of the guilty. Of this we have full proof in the punishment of the fallen

\* See Phil. iii. 21, and 1 Cor. xv.

† Dan. xii. 2.

angels, which are reserved in “chains of darkness” unto the judgment\* of the great day. And the Scriptures repeatedly and most solemnly assure us, that by the same power all the unbelieving and impenitent among men shall finally be punished in the same place of torment; that is, as the divine word expresses it, “in fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels. These shall go away,” said the holy Jesus, “into everlasting punishment: but,” adds he immediately, “the righteous into life eternal†.”

This introduces the last thing I proposed to remark, which is, That power must be ascribed unto God, as the Rewarder of those that love and serve him. No man can merit any good thing from God; and his people will freely acknowledge that they are *unprofitable servants*. And yet, in divine condescension, the Lord, is pleased to call the blessings which he bestows upon the faithful, after death, a *reward*, as well as a *gift*. And for your comfort, Christians, let me say, that all

\* 2 Pet. ii. 4.

† Matt. xxv. 41 &amp; 46.



the rich promises of future happiness to you will be fulfilled in their season : for God hath power to do it. The disciples of Jesus “ are kept by the power of God, through faith “ unto salvation\*.” Salvation is the thing promised them, and nothing less will be given them : a full, complete, and eternal salvation. No mortal eye hath seen, no mortal ear hath heard, no mortal heart can conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love and serve him on the earth. But this we do know, that in the bright world to which we go, there is *no more curse*†; no more of the curse of sin, no more of the curse of pain, no more of the curse of sorrow ; but pleasures pure and undefiled, a felicity every way perfect, and joys unfading and everlasting, await the faithful in Christ Jesus. These things being promised by thee, O God, *faithful and true*, they will most undoubtedly be performed in favour of thy people, for *thine is the power*.

To conclude. From the whole I infer First, That it is both our interest and our duty,

\* 1 Pet. i. 5.      † Rev. xxii. 3.

to seek the grace and mercy of God, by Jesus Christ. If we are accepted by him, we shall be safe and happy indeed. "For the LORD God  
 "is a sun and shield: the LORD will give  
 "grace and glory, and no good thing will he  
 "with-hold from them that walk uprightly."

Secondly. Our praises are due to God for all the common blessings of the present state; for life, health, reason, friends, food and raiment. But infinitely are Christians indebted,

Thirdly, To the power of God in "plucking  
 "them as brands from the burning." Think on this, all ye that now see the evil of sin, and delight to work righteousness. Recollect who it was that delivered you from darkness favoured you with the Gospel of truth, made that Gospel effectual to your conversion, and has made you "more than conquerors through  
 "him that hath loved you." You cannot be too thankful for your birth in a Christian land; and for God's Sabbaths, and Ordinances and Ministers, and for the frequent opportunities you have enjoyed and still enjoy, for hearing the Gospel preached in a plain manner,

and for worshipping your God “in the beauty  
“of holiness\*.” Your privileges are great,  
and

\* The advantages of public worship are so many, so great and so desirable, that a humane and reflecting mind cannot but feel a tender pity for those who are providentially deprived of it, and true kindness will endeavour to supply the defect. In this land of liberality, much has been done to relieve bodily distress. Our charitable institutions and establishments are numerous and noble. But I beg leave here to remark, that the greatest charity is due to the souls of mankind. They are immortal, and when millions of years are fled, they will still exist in a state of perfect happiness, or perfect misery. To them, therefore, the most solemn care belongs. And it is devoutly to be wished, that in all our public charitable establishments, proper persons were appointed, to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the thoughtless to reflection, and to guide the erring foot into the path of life; as well as to soothe the sorrowful, and “comfort the feeble minded,” by preaching the pure Gospel, and praying in the name, of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

But let me here be permitted to call the attention of my reader more particularly to that part of mankind, whose lot it is to be confined in those abodes of poverty and affliction, commonly called ‘Work-Houses,’ provided by parishes for the reception of the aged, the infirm and indigent. Against such places I am sensible the poor in general entertain great prejudices. And I do not wonder at it. The single idea of *confinement* is enough to disgust many. Others are hurt at the thought of sinking so low in the eyes of their neighbours, as to be obliged to take up their residence in such places; though all ought to remember, that *honest* poverty is no disgrace.

But

and your blessings many. May your gratitude and obedience be proportioned to both.

And

But I am persuaded, that the grand grievance with the sober and pious poor is, the noise, the disorder, and above all, the *profanity*, which too often is suffered to prevail and reign, in a manner uncontrolled, in these habitations of mingled sin and sorrow. It is a pity therefore, but this cause of complaint were universally removed.

On this subject I wish to be rightly understood. I am not finding fault with the appointment of such houses. I am free to say, I think it a happiness that such a provision is made for those who can make none for themselves; and I wish the poor could more generally think so too; for then, with all its inconveniences, they would receive it with thankfulness to God, and gratitude to men. But as afflicted fellow creatures, as parts of ourselves, sunk into sorrow and distress, humanity pleads hard for their having the burden of grief which generally accompanies poverty and sickness, rendered as light as possible. And in those houses provided by parishes for the accommodation of the poor, much depends on management, on establishing order, and on doing all that can be done to abolish every species of immorality, and to prevent all improper words and works.

It is evident, therefore, that much depends on the choice of a Master, or Governor, whose office it is to superintend the affairs of the family. While it is on all hands allowed, that he ought to be capable of maintaining *proper* authority; it must also be acknowledged, that he ought to be a man of sound morals and strict piety; and in the management of those



And then you may trust God with your  
souls for evermore, and rejoice in the future  
prospect

committed to his care, he should be governed by Prudence,  
and not by Passion.

But as in such houses, there commonly are aged and feeble persons, who are unable to go abroad to public worship, and yet earnestly desire it ; and as there are many others who are both ignorant and irreligious, the voice of Christianity speaks loudly in their favour, and invites to these objects of compassion, the kind attention of those whose honour, as well as whose office, it is, to “preach the gospel to the poor.” To them, the promises and the threatenings, the privileges and the duties, of our holy religion, should be familiarly and affectionately explained. And let it not be accounted too great a stretch of charity to say, It is to be hoped there are not many towns in this kingdom, where some clergyman might not be fixed on, who would cheerfully enter, if requested, on this benevolent undertaking, and execute it with satisfaction to himself, as well as advantage to others. Prudence will direct, as to time and manner.

This is one way of mending the world. For, as the aged and dying would be comforted, children and youth would be instructed. With *these* we naturally expect some pains would be taken. And, perhaps, young and old would not only hear the Gospel, but all, we might hope, would in time be furnished with Bibles, and other pious and proper books. And thus, religious knowledge would be diffused, the dejected would receive consolation, the profane might be reformed, and the children would have an opportunity of learning, in a  
degree,

prospect set before you in “ the book of  
“ life.”

But finally; Let all unpardoned sinners  
tremble at the apprehension of divine power  
and wrath. Now, now, let them haste, in

degree, their duties to their God, and their earthly bene-  
factors; and instead of coming out into the world as ignorant  
as they are poor, they would understand, in a measure, what  
their masters have a right to require from them, and see the  
*reasonableness* of those just requisitions, injunctions and prohi-  
bitions, the design and propriety of which they do not now  
comprehend, and with which they often reluctantly comply.

This also is the way for them to be delivered from those  
bad habits which they otherwise might carry with them into  
families, and for which they would greatly suffer. This,  
therefore, is the way to lessen the quantity of human misery,  
as well as human guilt. Though I cannot but fear that,  
after all, there are some whose cruelty of heart and savageness  
of disposition, would lead them to behave to these helpless  
children, more like brutes than men. Their case, in general,  
is exceedingly to be pitied. In their behalf, therefore,  
let me appeal to the mercy of Magistrates, and others, who  
may have the disposal of these poor children, and beg that  
they will not place them in the hands of those who are of  
known hardness of heart. And after parish apprentices are  
bound out, it would be an act of great, I had almost said,  
godlike, kindness, to enquire into the usage they receive,  
and to be *assured* that they are not abused, but are, *in all*  
*respects*, treated as they ought—for *they* can neither speak  
nor act for themselves.

heart

heart and soul, to the bleeding Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the truly penitent. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day," the hour, the moment, "of salvation." Therefore put not off this great work till to-morrow. If you are in earnest now, the POWER of God will help, and not destroy, you.

LEC-

L E C T U R E XIII.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

THINE IS THE GLORY.

SWEET is the work, and pleasant pass the hours, when a Christian, in a proper frame of mind, contemplates the divine perfections of his God. Noble is the employ, and refined is the entertainment, to a devout soul, to meditate on the various works of the Almighty, and “ ascribe unto him the glory due unto his “ name.”

May the Lord give us an understanding to perceive, and an heart to feel, our vast obligations to his blessed Majesty, that with proper views and sincere souls we may ever more utter these significant words—*Thine is the glory.*

In discoursing from the text, I shall attempt to shew you, That to God must be ascribed the  
glory



glory of creation, of redemption and of all his various works of every name and order. Or in other expressions, I shall endeavour to shew you, that all which God hath done, he hath done with a view to his own glory, and this is to be acknowledged by all his creatures.

First ; This is true of the great work of Creation, taken in all its parts. In considering this article, it is natural for us to begin with the holy Angels, the prime part of God's work of creation. And with respect to them, both reason and revelation teach us, that they were created for God's glory. We are assured, in general, that he "made all things for himself." And upon an attentive reading of the scriptures, this is *evidently* true of the Angels in particular. But this will best appear, by considering how they have been employed, both on earth and in heaven.

When the Almighty laid the foundations of the earth, and raised the beautiful frame of nature, "the morning stars sang together, and "all those sons of God shouted for joy."—When Sodom was to be destroyed by fire and  
brimstone

brimstone from heaven, two *angels*, as the servants of God, “hastened Lot,” and told him to “escape for his life.” When Abraham, who had been commanded to offer up his son Isaac, was about to let his uplifted hand fall upon his yielding son, an “*angel* of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham, Lay not thine hand upon the lad.”

When the king of Assyria distressed the Jews, and threatened to swallow them up, as it were, with his mighty army, “Hezekiah prayed before the Lord God of Israel,” and besought him to save his people from the hand of the king of Assyria—and it came to pass in one night, “that the *angel* of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand :” and thus did the God of Israel gain himself *glory* in the overthrow of a haughty enemy, and in the deliverance of his own people, who fled to him for safety.

When a Saviour was to be born, and Joseph hesitated about taking to himself the Virgin Mary,

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Mary, “ the *angel* of the Lord appeared unto  
 “ him in a dream, saying, Joseph, Fear not  
 “ to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that  
 “ which is conceived in her, is of the Holy  
 “ Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son,  
 “ and thou shalt call his name JESUS.”

Again. When this Saviour was born, his  
 birth was announced by an *angel* to the poor  
 shepherds, who watched over their flock by  
 night. For “ lo, the Angel of the Lord came  
 “ upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone  
 “ round about them ; and they were sore afraid.  
 “ And the Angel said unto them, Fear not :  
 “ for behold, I bring you good tidings of great  
 “ joy, which shall be to all people. For unto  
 “ you is born this day, in the city of David,  
 “ a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord.—  
 “ And suddenly there was with the Angel  
 “ a *multitude* of the heavenly host, praising  
 “ God, and saying, Glory to God in the  
 “ highest, and on earth peace, good will to-  
 “ wards men.”

In the Old Testament we are told, that God  
 “ maketh his *angels* spirits ; his ministers a  
 “ flaming

“ flaming fire.” In the New we are informed, that they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation\*.

After our Lord was crucified, he was laid in a sepulchre ; that sepulchre was sealed and watched, in order to make every thing as sure as the enemies of Christ were able. Soon after our Lord’s resurrection, a few pious women went to see the sepulchre. “ And behold, there was a great earthquake ; for the *angel* of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.—And for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. But the *angel* said unto the women, Fear not ye ; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.”

I must remark to you once more, that at the great judgment day, the holy Angels will be conspicuously employed to the *glory* of their infinite God ; and in promoting that glory,

\* Heb.i. 14.

they

they will perform many illustrious actions in the presence of an assembled universe, when we shall not be idle and uninterested spectators. Our blessed Lord compares the end of the world to a *harvest*, when men reap and gather in their grain. At the great harvest, when all mankind must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, he tells us that “ the reapers  
 “ are the *angels*—for the Son of man shall  
 “ send forth his Angels, and they shall gather  
 “ out of his kingdom all things that offend,  
 “ and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast  
 “ them into a furnace of fire : there shall be  
 “ wailing and gnashing of teeth\*.”

And, to close this article, we are forewarned by St. Paul, that “ the Lord Jesus shall be  
 “ revealed from heaven,” at the last day,  
 “ with his mighty *angels*, in flaming fire,  
 “ taking vengeance on them that know not  
 “ God, and that obey not the gospel of our  
 “ Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished  
 “ with everlasting destruction from the pre-  
 “ sence of the Lord, and from the glory of

\* Matt. xiii. 39, &c.

“ his

“ his power ; when he shall come to be *glorified* in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe\*.”

And at the close of the eighth chapter of St. Mark's gospel, there is a remarkable passage, by which the blessed Jesus shews us, that God will at last be honoured even by the holy angels' approbation of his sentence against those men who are now ashamed to speak and act in the world as the Lord requires them—  
 “ What shall it profit a man,” saith Christ,  
 “ if he shall gain the whole world, and lose  
 “ his own soul ? Or what shall a man give  
 “ in exchange for his soul ? Whosoever there-  
 “ fore shall be ashamed of me, and of my  
 “ words, in this adulterous and sinful genera-  
 “ tion, of him also shall the Son of man be  
 “ ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of  
 “ his Father, with the holy angels.”

Thus in searching the Bible from beginning to end, it is evident that God created the angels for the purposes of his own glory. And it is no less evident, that they are always hap-

2 Theff. i. 7, &c.

U

pily



pily employed in advancing the divine honour and glory. They live not to themselves, but unto him whose they are, and on whom they depend. In his favour and service doth their felicity consist.—“ They rest not day and “ night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God “ Almighty, which was, and is, and is to “ come.”

Next it must be observed, That God created *Man* for his own glory. He “ made him a “ little lower than the angels, and crowned “ him with glory and honour\*.” Yea, so great was the honour which God put upon man, that he created him in his own likeness, in point of intelligence, righteousness and holiness. He gave him an understanding heart, and “ taught him more than the beasts of “ the earth, and made him wiser than the “ fowls of heaven,” because he was destined to much higher and nobler purposes.

Man was designed to contemplate the divine perfections, and to ascribe *glory* unto God. The Lord endowed him with capacities for

\* Psal. viii.

knowing,

knowing, loving, fearing and serving him upon the earth, and in a way of duty and devotion he was to be trained up for heaven. He had a living soul breathed into him by his infinite Parent, and was designed for immortality.

I need not inform you, that this noble creature rendered himself ignoble and base by sinning against his Creator. Man is now a fallen, groveling and guilty creature. Instead of delighting *naturally* in God, and the things of God, he delights in sin, and walks in the paths of death and ruin. He is bent upon “fulfilling the desires of his sinful flesh and of his carnal mind,” rather than the will of God, his heavenly Father.—In this state, man is exposed to the worst of evils; even to the wrath of God, and eternal damnation.

The Holy Spirit of God has convinced some of sin, and happily influenced them to exchange it for purity and righteousness. Others remain in darkness and in disobedience. But the wicked and the good are all made to promote, in some sense, the glory of God, though the former do it without design. The proud

king of Assyria, when he thought he was advancing his own honour and greatness, was in reality, though unknowingly, doing the work of providence, and glorifying Him whose secret and unerring wisdom ruleth over all\*. Instances might easily be multiplied; but they will be supplied by the memory of those to whom the Bible is familiar: and it will be well if others read it till it *is* familiar to them. And no doubt can be made, by those who make the holy Scriptures their rule of judging, that God will finally be glorified in the destruction of impenitent sinners, as he will in the salvation of those who truly believe in Jesus, and humbly obey his gospel.

‘The divine administration,’ says Dr. Blair, ‘is *glorified* in the punishment contrived for the workers of iniquity, as well as in the reward prepared for the righteous.’ And, as this elegant author observes, the various actions of all sorts of men in the present world, ultimately ‘redound to the glory of the universal Governor. While,’ says he, ‘among the multitudes that dwell on the face of

\* See Isai. x.

‘ the

‘ the earth, some are submissive to the divine  
 ‘ authority ; some rise up in rebellion against  
 ‘ it ; others, absorbed in their pleasures and  
 ‘ pursuits, are totally inattentive to it ; they are  
 ‘ all so moved by an imperceptible influence  
 ‘ from above, that the zeal of the dutiful,  
 ‘ the wrath of the rebellious, and the indif-  
 ‘ ference of the careless contribute *finally* to  
 ‘ the *glory of God*.’

And as God made *man* for his own glory,  
 so did he create the heavens above and the earth  
 beneath for the same high and noble purpose.  
 “ The heavens declare the *glory* of God ;  
 “ and the firmament sheweth his handy work.  
 “ Day unto day uttereth speech, and night  
 “ unto night sheweth knowledge. There is  
 “ no speech nor language where their voice  
 “ is not heard.” All, all are expressive of  
 their mighty Maker’s praise. They declare  
 his omnipotent power, his perfect wisdom  
 and astonishing goodness : inasmuch that the  
 apostle Paul scruples not to say, in his first  
 chapter to the Romans, that “ the invisible  
 “ things of God from the creation of the  
 “ world, are clearly seen, being understood by  
 U 3 “ the



“ the things that are made, even his eternal  
“ power and godhead.”

Upon this occasion, and on this subject, I shall introduce the beautiful lines of a certain great writer, who long has been, and long will be, admired for his understanding and his elegance. The hymn of which I now speak, is evidently founded on the nineteenth psalm, and runs in these sweet words—

‘ The spacious firmament on high,  
‘ With all the blue etherial sky,  
‘ And spangled heav’ns, a shining frame,  
‘ Their great original proclaim :  
‘ Th’ unwearied sun, from day to day,  
‘ Does his Creator’s pow’r display,  
‘ And publishes to ev’ry land  
‘ The work of an Almighty Hand.

‘ Soon as the ev’ning shades prevail,  
‘ The moon takes up the wond’rous tale ;  
‘ And nightly to the list’ning earth  
‘ Repeats the story of her birth,  
‘ Whilst all the stars that round her burn,  
‘ And all the planets, in their turn,  
‘ Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
‘ And spread the truth from pole to pole.

‘ What though, in solemn silence, all  
‘ Move round the dark terrestrial ball ?

‘ What

‘ What tho’ nor real voice nor found  
 ‘ Amid their radiant orbs be found ?  
 ‘ In reason’s ear they all rejoice,  
 ‘ And utter forth a glorious voice ;  
 ‘ Forever singing as they shine,  
 ‘ The Hand that made us is DIVINE\*.’

In like manner the earth, “ and the great  
 “ and wide sea also,” were created for the  
 praise, and are preserved for the *glory* of  
 Almighty God. From the smallest of the  
 finny race, to the “ great leviathan, whom he  
 “ hath made to play in the vast ocean ; from  
 “ the cedar in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop  
 “ that springeth out of the wall,” God hath a  
 revenue of glory.

The holy psalmist calls upon all nature to  
 praise the Lord. The inanimate as well as the  
 animate parts of the creation, are commanded  
 to join the universal chorus. “ Praise ye him,  
 “ sun and moon : praise him all ye stars of  
 “ light. Praise him ye heaven of heavens,  
 “ and ye waters that be above the heavens.—  
 “ Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons  
 “ and all deeps. Fire and hail, snow and

\* Spec,

U 4,

“ vapour,

“ vapour, stormy wind, fulfilling his word.  
 “ Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and  
 “ all cedars. Beasts and all cattle, creeping  
 “ things, and flying fowl. Kings of the earth,  
 “ and all people; princes and all judges of the  
 “ earth. Both young men and maidens, old  
 “ men and children. Let them praise the  
 “ name of the Lord: for his name alone is  
 “ excellent, his glory is above the earth and  
 “ heaven\*.”

Agreeable to this, holy David, addressing himself to God, saith, “ Thou makest the  
 “ outgoings of the morning and evening to  
 “ rejoice. Thou crownest the year with thy  
 “ goodness, and thy paths drop fatness. They  
 “ drop upon the pastures of the wilderness;  
 “ and the little hills rejoice on every side.—  
 “ The pastures are clothed with flocks; the  
 “ vallies are covered over with corn; they  
 “ shout for joy, they also sing†.”

But particularly in this view, doth the earth, with all its various productions, praise

\* Psal. cxlviii.

† Psal. lxxv.

and glorify God, because the produce of the ground is designed for, and fitted to, the use, the convenience and the comfort of Man, God's only rational creature below. Some things are good for food, and some for phyfic; some are real necessaries, others are embellishments, and all are intended to be the  *blessings*  of life. The power of God is as visible to a discerning eye in the smallest blade of grass, as his goodness is in all "the cattle upon a thousand hills;" and glory reflects to him from both. But if the glory of God is so visible in these material things, with what a surprising lustre will it burst forth, when we open the Gospel, and look into the wonders of Redemption!

This is the second thing I proposed to mention. The redemption of man, by Jesus Christ, is, undoubtedly, the most astonishing display of divine wisdom, mercy and love, that ever mortal heard or angel saw. Here we see God's own Son leaving the thrones of heaven; making himself of no reputation\*; taking upon

\* See Phil. ii.

him



him the form of a servant (being found in fashion as a man) humbling himself to converse familiarly with fallen creatures ; going about upon this earth of wretchedness and woe, doing good to the bodies and souls of men ; fulfilling the divine law ; submitting to be reviled, persecuted, apprehended and tried, as a malefactor ; to be falsely accused and cruelly condemned ; and at last stooping to death, even the death of the cross ; making an Atonement for believers ; reconciling an offended God and repenting man, and effecting peace for them who had merited “ indignation and wrath.”

That all this has been done for the glory of God, in connexion with the good of man, is a truth which dazzles in the Gospel as the sun in the firmament. When good old Simeon had seen and embraced the Saviour, he exclaimed, “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, “ a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory “ of thy people Israel.” The Gospel dispensation is called by St. Paul, a ministration of *righteousness*, and a ministration of *glory*. He informs us, that God hath predestinated his people

people unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, “to the praise of the glory of his grace\*.” Christians are such, by Christ, to the “glory of God†.” The promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, unto the “glory of God‡.” We are to confess that Jesus is Lord, to the “glory of God§.” The thanksgivings of believers redound to the “glory of God||!”

The apostle Peter addresses the Lord's people thus—“ Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice; though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith being much

\* Eph. i.    † Phil. i. 11.    Pet. v. 10.    ‡ 2 Cor. i. 20.  
§ Phil. ii. 11.    || 2 Cor. iv. 15.

“ more

“ more precious than of gold that perisheth,  
 “ though it be tried with fire, might be  
 “ found unto *praise*, and *honour*, and *glory*,  
 “ at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom  
 “ having not seen, ye love; whom, though  
 “ now ye see him not, yet believing, ye  
 “ rejoice with joy unspeakable, and *full of*  
 “ *glory*—which things the angels desire to  
 “ look into\*.”

All that are saved by Jesus Christ will be  
 eternal monuments of God's glory and good-  
 ness, and will forever be ascribing praise unto  
 their heavenly Benefactor. In the book of  
 Revelation we have this truth represented in a  
 very lively manner. The sacred writer, it has  
 been thought, makes a distinction between  
 the celebrations of angels who never needed  
 redemption, and “ the spirits of just men  
 “ made perfect,” who were once in a state of  
 guilt, and have been redeemed and washed  
 in the blood of the Lamb†.

He tells us, that “ the four and twenty  
 “ elders, or angels, fall down before him that

\* 1 Pet. i.

† Rev. i. 5.

“ is on the throne, and worship him that  
 “ liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns  
 “ before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy,  
 “ O Lord, to receive *glory*, and *honour*, and  
 “ *power* ; for thou hast created all things,  
 “ and for thy pleasure they are and were  
 “ created\*.”

In the seventh chapter of this book, the redeemed of the Lord, and their devotions, seem to be spoken of ; and the holy angels are represented as joining in the chorus at last.

“ I beheld,” says the Apostle, “ and lo, a  
 “ great multitude, which no man could num-  
 “ ber, of *all nations*, and *kindreds*, and *people*,  
 “ and *tongues*, stood before the throne, and  
 “ before the Lamb, clothed with white robes,  
 “ and palms in their hands ; And they cried  
 “ with a loud voice, saying, *Salvation to our*  
 “ *God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto*  
 “ *the Lamb*. And all the angels stood round  
 “ about the throne, and fell before the throne  
 “ on their faces, and worshipped God, saying,  
 “ Amen ; blessing, and glory, and wisdom,  
 “ and thanksgiving, and honour, and power,

\* Rev. iv.

“ and



“and might, be unto our God for ever and  
“ever. Amen.”

Thus it appears that all the works and all the creatures of God, are designed for his *glory*. So true is the assertion of Solomon, “The Lord hath made all things for himself: “yea, even the wicked for the day of evil\*.” And no reasonable doubt can be made, that his word, his law, and his perfections, will be glorified, in the great judgment-day, in the full salvation of his people, in the complete punishment of devils, and the condemnation of wicked men, who are to have their portion “with the devil and his angels.”

In the words of the celebrated writer† already quoted in this discourse, I conclude these observations. ‘How amazing is that wisdom, ‘which comprehends such infinite diversities, ‘and contrarieties, within its scheme? How ‘powerful that hand, which bends to its own ‘purpose the good and the bad, the busy and ‘the idle, the friends and foes of truth; which ‘obliges them all to hold on their course to

\* Prov. xvi. 4.

† Dr. Blair.

‘ *his glory*, though divided from one another  
 ‘ by a multiplicity of pursuits, and differing  
 ‘ often from themselves ; and while they all  
 ‘ move at their own freedom, yet by a secret  
 ‘ influence, winds and turns them at his will !  
 ‘ *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom*  
 ‘ *and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable*  
 ‘ *are his judgments, and his ways past finding*  
 ‘ *out*\* ! This depth of divine wisdom in the  
 ‘ administration of the universe, exceeds all  
 ‘ human comprehension, and affords everlast-  
 ‘ ing subject of adoration and praise.’

I shall endeavour now to make a suitable,  
 though short, improvement of this subject.  
 And I infer First ; That as the holy angels  
 were created, and are continually employed, for  
 the honour and glory of God, all the people of  
 God upon earth may hope for their kind ser-  
 vices in their favour. Accordingly, we are  
 expressly told that, “ the angel of the Lord  
 “ encampeth round about them that fear him,  
 “ and delivereth them†.” And again it is  
 said, “ Are they not all ministering spirits,  
 “ sent forth to minister for them who shall be

\* Rom. xi. 33.    † Psal. xxxiv. 7.

“ heirs

“ heirs of salvation\*?” The angels, however, are in this no more than the “ servants of “ God,” for our good ; and therefore while we enjoy the advantage of their guardianship and ministry, we must be careful that we do not in our minds pay them undue veneration.

Secondly ; When we view the heavens above and the earth beneath, we should endeavour to behold God in his works, and to offer him that tribute of *glory* which he has a right to expect from us. When we behold the glorious Sun, we should reflect on his more glorious Creator, and adore and reverence him in our souls. When we view the fruitful earth, we ought to reflect on the Bounty of our God, and be thankful. And as all the produce of the ground is designed for God’s *glory*, we should be careful that we use none of it to his *dishonour*.

Thirdly ; When we consider the mighty power of God in the mighty works of creation, we ought to humble ourselves before this Omnipotent Being, and adopt the following

\* Heb. i. 14.

language—

language—"When I consider thy heavens,"  
 O Lord, "the work of thy fingers, the  
 "moon and the stars which thou hast or-  
 "dained; what is man, that thou art mindful  
 "of him, and the Son of man, that thou  
 "visitest him!"

Fourthly; When we reflect, that God created man for *his glory*, we ought to blush and be ashamed, that we have been so little careful to promote that glory, by living according to the will of God. We have reason to grieve, that we have so often sinned against the Lord, and especially as we know that Christ died upon the cross on account of sin.

That we have all been too careless, is, I think, too evident. But through the grace of God, a few, I trust, do endeavour to honour HIM, who gives them life, breath, and all things. Happy souls! Let them be thankful and cheerful. Let each true Christian make his acknowledgments to the Supreme Benefactor of mankind, in some such language as the following—

X

‘ God



‘ God of my life, and source of my joys !  
 ‘ Thou art the author of every blessing : from  
 ‘ thee every good and every perfect gift de-  
 ‘ scendeth. I bow before thee at this time,  
 ‘ to adore the power that supports, the hand  
 ‘ that feeds, and the eye that watches over,  
 ‘ me. But particularly would I acknowledge  
 ‘ thy mercies to my Soul. To thee belongs  
 ‘ the *glory* of my faith, my hope, my love,  
 ‘ my humility, and my every grace.

‘ I am bound to praise thee, for all the  
 ‘ knowledge I have of the Holy Scriptures,  
 ‘ and for all the pious pleasure I derive from  
 ‘ perusing and pondering them. O ! make  
 ‘ the meditation of them still sweeter. Cause  
 ‘ my heart more and more to rejoice in them.  
 ‘ May the word of God “ dwell in me richly,”  
 ‘ and by that word, and the Blessed Spirit that  
 ‘ inspired it, may I be guided through all my  
 ‘ future life.

‘ To thee, Lord, belongs the *glory* of my  
 ‘ hating sin, and striving against it. Had it  
 ‘ not been for thy providence and grace, I  
 ‘ should now have been walking in the paths  
 ‘ of

‘ of vice and immorality ; or, at least, been  
 ‘ careless and thoughtless, as thousands are ;  
 ‘ unmindful of thy blessed Majesty, inattentive  
 ‘ to the duties thou hast commanded, and  
 ‘ negligent of the inestimable favours and  
 ‘ blessings thou hast promised to them that  
 ‘ love thee. To thee I am indebted for “ a  
 ‘ “ new heart and a right spirit,” and for all the  
 ‘ happy consequences of a heavenly principle  
 ‘ implanted in my bosom.

‘ *Thine, therefore, is the glory, O Lord ! of*  
 ‘ my love to holiness, and my earnest desires  
 ‘ after purity. Thee must I praise, thy name  
 ‘ must I magnify, for my good intentions, and  
 ‘ all my upright endeavours in the world, to  
 ‘ honour thy holy gospel, and to profit man-  
 ‘ kind—by imitating the example of Christ,  
 ‘ my Saviour ; by abstaining from all appear-  
 ‘ ances of evil ; by rebuking sin ; by encou-  
 ‘ raging godliness ; by wiping the tear of sorrow  
 ‘ from the mourner’s eye ; by promoting love  
 ‘ and good-will among men ; and by “ adorning  
 ‘ “ the doctrine I profess, in all things,” as the  
 ‘ Spirit of all Goodness is pleased to assist me.  
 ‘ *Thine is the glory, Lord, even of this dis-*  
 X 2                      ‘ position

‘ position to pray unto thee, and praise thee.  
 ‘ And therefore to THEE belongs all the *glory*  
 ‘ of my complete Salvation, which I hope for,  
 ‘ through Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son.’

Lastly. With seriousness and solemnity of soul, let me beg that you will all consider the immediate necessity of an attention to religion. The great, and to the unpardoned sinner, the awful and dreadful, *uncertainty of life*, calls aloud for watchfulness and prayer ; for holiness both of heart and life\*. And as Jesus Christ died to “redeem us from all iniquity,” let us add this consideration to the former, and pray to God to make them both effectual. Every day let us think on the wonders and mercies of redemption, and pray for grace and power to live answerably to them ; that God may at last be glorified in our salvation, and not in our destruction. Knowing, saith St. Paul, “ in that Christ died, he died unto sin once :

\* On Lord’s Day, November 13th, 1791, one of the author’s hearers, who attended public worship in the morning, was dead before the people met again for worship in the afternoon. An awful warning, and the second of the kind within a short time. See Introductory Discourse, p. 5.

“ but

“ but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.  
 “ Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be  
 “ dead indeed unto sin ; but alive unto God  
 “ through Jesus Christ our Lord. Yield not  
 “ your members as instruments of unrighte-  
 “ ousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto  
 “ God, as those that are alive from the dead :  
 “ and your members as instruments of righte-  
 “ ousness unto God\*.”

“ Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or  
 “ whatsoever ye do, Do all to the *glory of God*,”  
 through faith in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

\* See Rom. vi.



# LECTURE XIV.

MATTHEW VI. 13.

FOR EVER.

OUR present state of existence, is a state of infancy. In this world we do but begin to live. The term allotted us on earth is very short. Life is a vapour, and time a moment. The eldest among mortals, in a higher or lower degree, are children. And this is true even of the *wisest* among men.

And yet, in this our state of childhood, we have to do with an Infinite God, "who is "from everlasting to everlasting," and who is "the same, yesterday, to-day and *for ever*;" a God, who is emphatically styled, "the Father "of lights, with whom is no variableness, "neither shadow of turning."

The ascriptions of praise, therefore, which are to be rendered unto Him, run not for a moment, or a day merely, but *for ever*; they are to be without cessation and without end.

In

In discoursing from the text, I shall consider the words

I. As they refer to this life; and

II. As they refer to the life which is to come.

I. As they refer to this life. And here I must consider them in connexion with the prayer of which they are a part. I begin therefore with observing, that God is *for ever* to be honoured by us, as he is "Our Father which is in heaven." By *For ever*, here, I mean, to the end of life; in contradistinction to men's honouring God just for an hour when they are under a sermon, or for a day when they are in the humour of it, or when some particular providence makes a more than ordinary impression upon the mind. This is not religion, properly so called, but passion: and passion is not durable.

On the contrary, our text would teach us, that our religious views and affections should be regular and constant. God is the same;

and so should our minds be towards him.—  
 Doubtless he is our Father, though many are  
 so unhappy as to know him not; and others are  
 so unwise as to glorify him not as they ought.  
 He it was that took us from our mother's  
 womb, and supported us when "we hung  
 " yet upon our mother's breast." And, alas!  
 we have furnished out too much reason for the  
 following exclamation—"Hear, O heavens;  
 " and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath  
 " spoken—I have nourished and brought up  
 " children, and they have rebelled against me.  
 " The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his  
 " master's crib: but Israel doth not know,  
 " my people doth not consider. Ah sinful  
 " nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed  
 " of evil doers, children that are corrupters;  
 " they have forsaken the Lord, they have pro-  
 " voked the Holy One of Israel unto anger,  
 " they are gone backward.—The whole head  
 " is sick and the whole heart faint. From the  
 " sole of the foot even unto the head, there is  
 " no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises,  
 " and putrifying sores\*."

\* Isai. i.

If this be really the case (and does not the above complaint in *some degree* apply to us?) then the first thing we have to do, is to make serious application to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the physician of souls, that we may be healed. Immediately should we cry unto him, and say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole." And there is no doubt, but the answer of his grace would be, "I will: be thou clean: be thou whole. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

Let this answer affect our souls. Let it co-operate with the text, and lead us to resolve that, by divine assistance, we will from this moment endeavour to live to the honour of God, till life shall end: That we will honour him in our thoughts, in our desires, in our designs and in all the secret transactions of our hearts: That we will strive to honour him in all our words, in all our works and in all our ways: That we will aim at this, at all times, in all places, with all companies and by all means. Let us determine that, by the gracious aids of his Holy Spirit, we will look  
upon



upon it both as our duty and our happiness, to honour God, our heavenly Father, *for ever*.

In the second place, Our text requires us to *fear* God *for ever*. It is the general exhortation of the Bible, that we fear God regularly and uniformly. That we take care to "be in his fear all the day long." That we fear before him *continually*. And we are assured that, "it shall be well with them that fear God:" and that, "happy is the man that feareth always."

Many fear God when they feel his judgments, but forget him when those judgments are removed. This is a conduct which the text condemns. Its style is, *For ever*; and nothing short of this will please him to whom the expression is addressed; nor will less excuse our consciences when we come to die. Every time we repeat the Lord's Prayer, we confess to God that all kinds of religious homage are due to him *for ever*.

Christians ought not at any time to fear God with a *slavish* fear. All that are converted to  
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the Lord, and live by faith on Jesus Christ, are the children of God by grace ; by redemption as well as by creation, and he is their reconciled God and Father, Their sins are pardoned, and their souls are precious to the God of love. And therefore they should not so fear him, as to be filled with dread and terror. But, “as obedient children,” they should be exceedingly careful to keep up a filial fear of him upon their minds, at all times. It should, on no account, on no occasion, be dispensed with. It will serve as a sacred guard to surround, and guide, and keep, them in the good ways of God.

The words of the apostle Peter are so applicable to my subject, that for our mutual benefit I must be allowed to transcribe them. “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, “and hope to the end, for the grace that is “to be brought unto you at the revelation “of Jesus Christ ; as obedient children, not “fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance : but as he “which hath called you is holy, so be ye “holy in all manner of conversation ; because  
“ it

“ it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy.  
 “ And if ye call on the Father, who without  
 “ respect of persons judgeth according to  
 “ every man’s work, pass the time of your  
 “ sojourning here in fear\*.”

“ The time of sojourning here,” in the language of St. Peter, is, in the language of our text, *For ever*; or in other words, so long as we remain on earth, even to the latest moment of life. This is clearly the apostle’s meaning. And this time he exhorts us to spend “ in fear;” that is, in a holy, child-like fear, of “ our Father which is in heaven.” And we are *so* to fear him, as to be willing to suffer any thing in our persons, in our property, in our reputation; yea, we are *so* to fear him, as to suffer death itself, for his sake and in his service, rather than offend him. “ Be not afraid of them that kill the body,” says Christ, “ and after that have no more “ that they can do. But I will forewarn you “ whom you shall fear: fear Him, which after “ he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell: “ yea, I say unto you, Fear HIM†.”

\* 1 Pet. i. † Luke xii. 4.

In the third place, Our text implies that we are to *love* our heavenly Father, *for ever*; that we are to love him as the supreme delight of our souls, and never suffer any thing to rival him in our affections, to our latest breath. God is ever good, and we should be ever faithful. If we are tempted by sinful pleasures, or by sinful gain, to forsake God, we should always recollect, that our hearts belong only unto him; that he has a perpetual right in them, and that we are bound by every sacred, by every solemn tie, to devote them to him *for ever*.

In the fourth place, By adopting the words of our text, we acknowledge that God is a king *for ever*, and, that “of his kingdom “there shall be no end.” And consequently, we acknowledge that we ought to be his dutiful and willing subjects *for ever*. We hereby confess, that we should cheerfully and constantly do what in us lies to promote the glory of our heavenly King upon the earth, by speaking and acting for him before men. And also, by fighting the battles of the Lord against sin and Satan, and by opposing ourselves



selves to every foe of God and our own souls,  
*for ever.*

Wherefore, brethren, “take unto you the  
“ whole armour of God, that ye may be able  
“ to withstand in the evil day, and every day;  
“ and having done all to stand: Stand therefore,  
“ having your loins girt about with truth, and  
“ having on the breast-plate of righteousness;  
“ and your feet shod with the preparation of  
“ the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the  
“ shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to  
“ quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

“ And take the helmet of salvation, and  
“ the sword of the spirit, which is the word  
“ of God: praying always with all prayer and  
“ supplication in the spirit, and watching there-  
“ unto with all perseverance\*.” In this way  
you will prove yourselves the faithful subjects  
of the Everlasting King, and may safely hope  
for “a crown of righteousness” when the con-  
flict is over. O! that there were in each of  
us such an heart, that we might serve God

\* Eph. vi.

diligently,

diligently, and earnestly desire to approve ourselves in his fight *for ever !*

In the fifth place, It is implied in the text, and by our adopting or repeating it, we express our belief of the truth, that God will finally triumph, and cause his servants to triumph, over all the kingdoms of darkness, and over all the power of the enemy. The world erects its kingdom of pride, of vanity, of falsehood, of lies, of riches, and honours, and pleasures, and trials, and crosses, and temptations, and troubles, with a view to oppose the kingdom of God, and by some means, by any means, to entangle men's souls, that they may at last be "drowned in perdition."

The monster, Sin, hath most daringly set up its kingdom in this world, and, it must be confessed, reigns at present with awful sway. Thousands, thousands, are its willing captives and cheerful slaves, and no man scarcely is heard to say, "What have I done?" "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage." And alas ! what multitudes do we see, who seem to struggle a little with  
sin,

fin, to make a few feeble efforts against it, and then quietly yield themselves up to its control and direction? A few, thanks be to God, have "escaped the pollution that is in the "world through lust," and are enabled to "watch, and keep their garments." But even they must always stand sword in hand, for their enemies are artful and mighty, and their "name "is Legion, for they are many."

Satan is so powerful, that he is called "the "god of this world\*." His kingdom is an extensive one, and it is a kingdom of iniquity. How melancholy to reflect, that he hath erected his kingdom even in the human-heart! That he *hath* done so, is evident, not only from experience, but also from the words of scripture. This is "the strong man armed," of which our blessed Lord speaks†; and who, while he can keep the palace of the heart, hath his goods in peaceable possession, and *will* keep them, till a stronger than he comes to spoil his armour and divide the prey. This is that spirit of wickedness of which St. Paul

\* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

† Luke xi. 21, &c.

speaks. Addressing himself to Christians, whom God had delivered from the snare of the devil, he says, “ And you hath he quickened, who  
 “ were dead in trespasses and sins—wherein  
 “ in time past ye walked according to the  
 “ course of this world, according to the prince  
 “ of the power of the air, *the spirit that now*  
 “ *worketh in the children of disobedience\**.”

He is a spirit that is active and diligent. He *worketh*, and he “ *worketh in the children*  
 “ *of disobedience.*” He is in their hearts, and works *there* that he may make them as vile and as wicked as he can. Filling them with ungodly thoughts, and unholy desires, and stirring them up to unrighteous and destructive actions. He not only wants them to be “ chil-  
 “ dren of disobedience,” but to be *more and*  
*more* such ; that they may perish at the last. He endeavours to make them as much like himself as possible here, that they may have their portion with him hereafter. What a dreadful state are poor sinners in ! Pity them, O my soul, and pray for them, and may the God of mercy hear my prayer.

\* Eph. ii. 1, &c.



Much it is to be lamented, that the inhabitants of this kingdom, who are so richly favoured with the Gospel, should, in general, so little consider both the duties and the privileges of Christianity. Melancholy is the prospect, to see so many led by custom, fashion and folly, which is no other than being “led captive by Satan at his will;” instead of being influenced by the doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ, and guided by the holy and unerring spirit of God. What deluded multitudes make an idol of worldly pleasure, and offer to it every day the sacrifices of an idolatrous heart? ‘It is not the LIVING GOD, it is PLEASURE that we worship. ‘To this we are idolaters; to this we sacrifice our time, our talents, our fortunes, our health, and too often our innocence and peace of mind. In our haste to enjoy this life, we forget that there is another; we live (as the apostle expresses it) WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD, and our endless engagements not only exclude all love, but all thought of him. There are thousands, even of those who would take it very ill to be called vicious, who yet from the time of their

' their rising in the morning to the time of  
 ' their going to rest at night, never once  
 ' bestow a single thought upon eternity;  
 ' nor, whilst they riot in the blessings of  
 ' providence, vouchsafe to cast one devout  
 ' look up to the gracious Author of them;  
 ' in whom **THEY LIVE AND MOVE**  
 ' **AND HAVE THEIR BEING\*.**

In consequence of sin, there is another  
 enemy that reigns like a tyrant upon the  
 earth, spreading devastation in all quarters,  
 and holding the world in awe. The enemy  
 I now speak of, is one that you fear, perhaps,  
 more than any I have before mentioned. It  
 is an enemy every day dreaded, but few,  
 very few indeed, take the right method to be  
 delivered from his terror.

You may easily perceive that I speak of  
**DEATH**: an enemy whom it would be vain  
 to oppose by art or power; but faith in a  
 Saviour's blood can disarm the tyrant, draw

\* See a sermon on men's being "lovers of pleasure more  
 " than lovers of God," drawn by the masterly hand of Dr.  
 Porteus, now bishop of London.

out his sting, and render him unable to hurt, even when he means to destroy. “Forasmuch  
 “ as the children are partakers of flesh and  
 “ blood, Christ also himself likewise took part  
 “ of the same ; that through death he might  
 “ destroy him that had the power of death,  
 “ that is, the devil ; and deliver them who  
 “ through fear of death were all their life-time  
 “ subject to bondage\*.”

At present, the victory to Christians is but partial : and through the same blessed Redeemer they obtain a partial victory over all other spiritual foes, and indeed over all the evils of the present state, of every name and nature ; and a complete one over any is not to be expected in this life. But lift up your heads with joy, all ye that fear and honour God, for we are taught by our text, that an entire victory will at last be gained by our Almighty Saviour, over all enemies, all opposition and all evil ; for his *kingdom*, his *power*, and his *glory*, are *for ever and ever*. He will finally triumph over the kingdom of sin, of Satan, of darkness, of death and the grave.

\* Heb. ii. 14. 15.

He will "bruise Satan under his feet." He will, with respect to his people, "make an "end of sin," and adorn them with everlasting righteousness. He will burn up the world, and all the works that are therein.

Therefore, to them that are of a fearful heart, I am instructed to say, "Be strong, fear "not: for behold, your God will come with "vengeance, even God with a recompence: "he will come and save you. And the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with "songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: "they shall obtain joy and gladness, and "sorrow and fighting shall flee away."

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is "death." But the time is hastening on when "death itself shall die." "For this corruptible "must put on incorruption, and this mortal "must put on immortality. So when this "corruptible shall have put on incorruption, "and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in "victory." Then shall the saints triumph in



their God, and adore, and praise, and magnify Him, that liveth and reigneth *for ever and ever*. Then shall they lift up their heads, never more to sink them; and then shall they exultingly say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then will the present scene of things be done away, and the saints of God will enter upon a very different state of existence. Then will it be said unto them, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. Come, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." Enter in, my disciples, enter in, and dwell here *for ever*. And "so an entrance shall be ministered unto them abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and  
"made

“ made them white in the blood of the Lamb.  
 “ Therefore will they be before the throne of  
 “ God, and serve him day and night in his  
 “ temple : and he that sitteth on the throne  
 “ shall dwell among them.”

And “ they shall hunger no more ; neither  
 “ thirst any more, neither shall the sun light  
 “ on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb  
 “ which is in the midst of the throne, shall  
 “ feed them, and shall lead them unto living  
 “ fountains of waters : and God shall wipe  
 “ away all tears from their eyes.”

“ Behold,” says the Redeemer, “ I come  
 “ quickly : hold that fast which thou hast,  
 “ that no man take thy crown. Him that  
 “ overcometh, will I make a pillar in the  
 “ temple of my God, and he shall go no  
 “ more out.” This is one of the privileges of  
 believers, that when they get safe to heaven,  
 they shall “ go no more out.” They shall  
 dwell before the throne of God and of the  
 Lamb, *for ever*. And there, there will they  
 be blest with a “ fulness of joy, and with  
 “ pleasures for evermore.”

This leads to observations on the text, as it refers to the life to come. The children of God, when removed from this world of sin and sorrow, will be received, we find, into their Father's house above : into that house which is "not made with hands," but is "eternal in the heavens." And the sweet employment of heaven, we have reason to think, will be adoration and praise. Praising God night and day, without these bodies of corruption, sin and weariness, must be sweet work indeed, my brethren ; and this, should you be so happy as to believe and live according to the gospel, will be *your* delightful work. In heaven you will praise God *for ever*,

In the first place, For giving you life and reason : and for supporting the life he gave, by the constant bounty of his good providence. You will then give him the praise that is due, for your present "daily bread." You will then acknowledge that he dealt with you as a Father, and you will admire his compassions.

In the second place, You will render thanks to God *for ever*, for all the afflictions, pains, sicknesses,

sickneſſes, diſappointments, unkindneſſes, ſufferings, and miſeries, which tended to make you ſenſible that nothing but God could make you happy. And particularly will you bleſs him for *that* CROSS which effectually weaned your hearts from this world, and prevailed on you to give them wholly to God, whoſe they are. You will remember *for ever* the bleſt day when God enabled you to “ hallow his name” in your ſpirits, when “ his kingdom” came into your ſouls, and when you deſired and longed to do the “ will of God on earth, as it is “ done in heaven.”

In the third place, You will praife your God *for ever*, for Jeſus Chriſt, through whom alone can man be accepted. In the preſent world this Saviour “ is precious to them that believe\*.” So the Apoſtle declares, and ſo the faithful followers of Jeſus find it by their own happy experience. ‘ Haſt thou never read or ‘ heard of an holy Man, who never uſed the ‘ name of *Jeſus*, but he added, not without ‘ the appearance of ſingular pleaſure, MY ‘ MASTER ? This was his glory ; this he

\* 1 Pet. ii. 7.

thought



‘ thought the highest honour upon earth, that  
 ‘ he served such a Master. Let this be one of  
 ‘ thy thoughts every day, Reader. Let it  
 ‘ work in thy mind, till the sense of these  
 ‘ words be engraven on thy heart—*My Master,*  
 ‘ *JESUS\**.’

But if Jesus be thus *precious* here, what gratitude will fill your hearts, for him and his salvation, when you reach heaven! “Thanks to God for his unspeakable gift,” will flow much more sweetly and freely from your lips then, than now; for then you will *better know* what an unspeakable gift is a SAVIOUR. Then your darkness will be exchanged for light; your ignorance for wisdom; and your dulness for alacrity; and, it is scarcely needful to add, your sorrow will be turned into joy. Like admiring angels, you will desire to look more and more deeply into the pleasing wonders of Redemption. And O! how happy, when you “are enabled to comprehend with glorified  
 “saints, what is the breadth, and length,  
 “and depth, and height; and to know the  
 “love of Christ, which in the present state far

\* Bp. Patrick on the Sacrament, p. 276.

“surpasseth

“surpasseth knowledge\*!” Then shall ye, indeed and in truth, be “rooted and grounded in love, and be filled with all the fulness of God.” And if your knowledge and your consolation so much abound, no wonder if your thanksgivings abound also.

In the fourth place, In heaven you will praise God *for ever*, Christians, for every day’s salvation which you experience on earth. You are sensible *now*, that you cannot keep yourselves; but that, if ever you are saved, you must be “kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation†.”

Then, it is likely, you will be much *more* sensible of it. And therefore you will ascribe unto God the glory of his *power*. O! How often will you say, in the language of gratitude and love, *Thine, O God, is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.* ‘To thee am I indebted for all my former grace, and present glory; to thee, therefore will I render praise, *for thou art worthy.*’ Yes, Christians! For ever, for ever, will you acknowledge

\* Eph. iii.

† 1 Peter i. 5.

unto

unto God, that "of his rich mercy he hath saved you," and in the highest strains of which redeemed souls are capable, you will say unto him, "Not unto us, not unto us, "O Lord, but unto thy name be all the glory," throughout eternal ages.

Thus, when the disciples of Jesus are received into the joy of their Lord, they will for ever and ever ascribe unto their God and Saviour, the glory of his mercy, his grace, his wisdom, his power, his truth, his faithfulness, his greatness, his goodness, his excellence, his majesty and munificence, in the world of blessedness and love. In that world will his saints see his face, and live for evermore. The existence and the glory both of the king and his subjects, of the gracious Father and his glorified children, will, in the language of our text, be *for ever*: for He is "the King Eternal," and his glory is "from everlasting to everlasting;" and so rich is he in goodness, that he bestows on every one of his spiritual children, "an eternal weight of glory\*."

\* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

From

From the whole view which we have taken of the subject, we may learn, First, That it is the privilege as it is the duty of all sincere Christians, to put an unshaken trust and confidence in the Lord at all times. His kingdom, his power and his glory, are for ever. There is no end of his greatness or his goodness, and therefore, there should be no end to our confidence in him, if we are his faithful servants. He is the “Faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy for ever ;” and he allows, yea he requires, us to depend upon him, according to his promises.

Let us therefore, cast all our cares upon him. Let us absolutely and without reserve, trust him with our health, our reason, our food, our raiment, our life, our friends, our religion ; with our whole selves, body, soul and spirit ; with all that we have and are ; with all that is dear to us while we live ; with our safety when we die, and with our happiness beyond the grave, even in that untried, unknown state, called Eternity. This let us do in a way of humble and careful obedience, and doubt not, but God, who has written the word  
FOR



FOR EVER, upon his goodness to his people; will “do exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.”

Secondly; How desirable is it to be a real Christian! How great is the happiness of loving, fearing and obeying God! Satan insinuates, and the world eagerly believes and rashly declares, that to live always under the serious impressions of religion; that is in other words (though it is not spoken plainly out) that to live as the Gospel of Jesus Christ directs and requires, is to be melancholy.—Attempts are made to persuade us, that such a mode of life would deprive men of all enjoyment. This shews us what notions of religion prevail in the world; and how far the human heart naturally is from God, and how awfully it is indisposed to his service, considered as a *reasonable* and *spiritual* service.

For the truth is, those who best understand the Gospel, and feel most of its power upon their souls, and obey it best in their lives, *know* it to be replete with comfort. It is not the shadow

Shadow that can, but the substance, or reality, of religion that must make us blest. To her real friends she appears amiable and lovely. To them she is beneficent and bountiful. Them she conducts to the fountain of felicity. For them she opens all the avenues of holy joy. And *these* are the persons to whom "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Therefore, in the beautifully descriptive language of Dr. PORTEUS, whose elegance I cannot but admire, while to imitate it I am unable, permit me to intreat you who are in search of pleasures, with a humble but firm dependence on the gracious aids of God's good spirit, earnestly sought by prayer, 'To 'try above all others, the pleasures of devotion. Think not that they are 'nothing more than the visions of a heated 'imagination. They are real, they are exquisite. They are what thousands have 'experienced, what thousands still experience, 'what you yourselves may experience.'—True religion 'will raise you above all low cares, and 'little gratifications. It will give dignity and 'sublimity to your sentiments, inspire you with  
'fortitude

' fortitude in danger, with patience in adver-  
 ' sity, with moderation in prosperity, with  
 ' alacrity in all your undertakings, with watch-  
 ' fulness over your own conduct, with bene-  
 ' volence to all mankind. It will be so far  
 ' from throwing a damp on your pleasures, that  
 ' it will give new life and spirit to them, and  
 ' make all nature look gay around you. It will  
 ' be a fresh fund of chearfulness in store for  
 ' you, when the vivacity of youth begins to  
 ' droop; and is the only thing that can fill  
 ' up that void in the soul which is left in it  
 ' by every earthly enjoyment. It will not,  
 ' like worldly pleasures, desert you, when you  
 ' have most need of consolation, in the hours  
 ' of solitude, of sickness, of old age; but when  
 ' once its HOLY FLAME is thoroughly  
 ' lighted up in your breasts, instead of becoming  
 ' more faint and languid as you advance in  
 ' years, it will grow brighter and stronger every  
 ' day; will glow with peculiar warmth and  
 ' lustre when your dissolution draws near; will  
 ' disperse the gloom and horror of a death-bed,  
 ' and give you a foretaste of that FULNESS  
 ' OF JOY, these pure celestial PLEASURES,  
 ' which

‘ which are at GOD’S RIGHT HAND  
‘ FOR EVERMORE\*.’

Thirdly ; How different and how dreadful is the state of the unpardoned sinner ! How unsafe now, and how miserable must be at last, every soul that is not converted from sin to holiness, and turned from Satan unto God ! Wo to them who live only for worldly profit, or sensual gratification. Dangerous beyond expression is the state of those who believe not aright in Christ, and who make it not their daily, and their highest, care to please God. Who can describe the wretchedness which the Scriptures assure us will take hold of such, when God cometh forth to judgment ? At that awful period, they have nothing to expect, but to be cast into the prison of Hell, where they will feel the effects of the divine displeasure, *for ever and ever*. “ The smoke  
“ of their torment,” says the inspired writer,  
“ ascendeth up *for ever and ever*†.”

Though God is good and gracious to his believing and obedient children, yet, to the

\* Psal. xvi. 11.

† Rev. xiv. 11.

Z

obstinately



obstinately wicked, he “is a consuming fire\*.”

‘ To them who neither *fear* nor *regard* him ;

‘ to the bold unbelieving libertine, who is

‘ against the Gospel, because the Gospel is

‘ against him ; to the man of pride and para-

‘ dox, who burns to distinguish himself from

‘ the vulgar by the novelty of his opinions,

‘ and would disdain to follow the common

‘ herd of mankind, even though he knew they

‘ were leading him to heaven ; to the subtle

‘ minute philosopher who fairly refines away

‘ every dictate of common sense, and is lost

‘ in the dark profound of his own wretched

‘ sophistry ; to the buffoon who laughs and

‘ takes pains to make all the world laugh

‘ at every thing serious and sacred ; to the

‘ indolent, negligent, superficial, free-thinker,

‘ who reads a little, takes for granted a great

‘ deal, and understands nothing thoroughly ;

‘ to the man of pleasure and amusement, who

‘ treats all things with a giddy, wanton, con-

‘ temptuous, levity ; and thinks that the whole

‘ fabric of revelation may be overturned, by a

‘ silly cavil, or a profane jest, thrown out in

‘ the gay moments of convivial mirth—To

\* Heb. xii. 29.

‘ these

‘ these I say, and all like these, the Almighty  
 ‘ will one day most assuredly show, that his  
 ‘ gracious offers of salvation are not to be  
 ‘ despised, and trampled upon, and ridiculed,  
 ‘ with impunity.’ All perseveringly wilful sin-  
 ners, of every name, must perish, the word of  
 God being the rule of judging. Sinners, ‘ you  
 ‘ may easily deceive the world; you may, if  
 ‘ you please, deceive yourselves; but God you  
 ‘ cannot deceive. *It is a small thing for you to*  
 ‘ *be judged of man’s judgment; He that judgeth*  
 ‘ *you is the Lord\**; and by the unerring rules  
 ‘ of his justice you must finally stand or fall.  
 ‘ Think then whether you can face that justice  
 ‘ without dismay†.’ Reflect, oh reflect on  
 this, sinners, and cry for converting grace,  
 that your course of life may be changed, and  
 that you may delight to do the will of God  
 from the heart.

To conclude. Let true Christians ever  
 remember, that God is their Father in Christ.

\* 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

† Bishop Porteus’ excellent Sermon on men’s “loving  
 “darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”

“ God is their defence, and the rock of their  
 “ salvation. Trust in HIM *at all times*, ye  
 “ believing and obedient people : pour out  
 “ your hearts before him, for God is a refuge  
 “ for us, *for ever and ever. Amen.*

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## LECTURE XV.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

AMEN.

NOT only sentences, but words; not only great words, but little ones, are, in the sacred Scriptures, truly significant. We are commanded to “take heed how we hear;” and we ought no less to take heed how we read. Every word of God is good, and to be attended to with reverence and awe; for no one word which he hath spoken, shall “return to him void.” And we are assured by our blessed Lord, whose prayer we have been considering, that “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail\*.”

The apostle Peter, in his first chapter, informs regenerated Christians, that they are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of

\* Luke xvi. 17.



“incorruptible, by the word of God, which  
 “liveth and abideth for ever. All flesh is as  
 “grafs, and all the glory of man as the flower  
 “of grafs. But the word of the Lord endureth  
 “for ever.” If what God hath spoken is  
 of fuch inconceivable importance in itfelf, it  
 ought to be highly prized by us; and every  
 word fhould be held precious in our efteem.  
 After what has been faid, I hope it will at  
 leaft be a *pardonable* undertaking, to attempt  
 to fhew what meanings may be affixed to the  
 word, *Amen*, and confider what may be drawn  
 from it for our inftruction or improvement.

And in difcourfing from this word, that I may  
 regard order, in fome meafure, I fhall confider  
 it as it particularly refpects God the Father,  
 his Son Jefus Chrift our Lord, and mankind  
 who utter it in their prayers.

I. *Amen* is a Hebrew word\*, and, like moft  
 other Hebrew words, full of meaning. As it  
 regards God, I obferve in the firft place, that  
 the word was firft ufed by *his* fpecial command.

מן

I think

I think it is no where to be found in the Bible, till we come to the book of Numbers. In the fifth chapter of that book, and at the twenty-second verse, it was commanded to be pronounced upon a very solemn occasion, which I may see cause particularly to mention in the progress of this discourse.—Now as this word was originally used by an order from God himself, we may well suppose that it was honoured with some peculiar significance. It was marked out as a word on which great stress should be laid in all future generations.

I observe in the second place, That the prime idea which this word seems designed to convey, is TRUTH, for it signifies *true*. So that by God's placing it at the end of remarkable sentences and at the conclusion of prayers, we are reminded of the Divine Veracity. If we understood the full import of the word, whenever we meet with it in this connection, it seems to say to us, 'The  
' Being whom you serve, is a God of Truth.  
' He will not deceive you. He will not mis-  
' lead you. He keepeth truth for evermore,

‘ and his word is firmer than the everlasting  
‘ hills.’

This, in the third place, introduces an idea near a-kin to the former, and leads me to observe, That the word under consideration signifies *faithful* ; and therefore if rightly regarded, would tend to strengthen our faith in God. It seems to say to us, ‘ The God  
‘ whom you worship, is steadfast. He is of  
‘ one mind, and none can turn him. Who  
‘ ever put their trust in him, and were con-  
‘ founded? *Every good gift, and every perfect  
‘ gift, is from above, and cometh down from  
‘ the Father of lights, with whom is NO  
‘ VARIABLENESS, neither SHADOW of  
‘ TURNING. He keepeth covenant and mercy  
‘ for ever.* The covenant he enters into with  
‘ his people, is an EVERLASTING COVE-  
‘ NANT, ORDERED IN ALL THINGS  
‘ AND SURE.’

‘ The God whom you serve, is not a man,  
‘ that he should lie ; nor the son of man, that  
‘ he should repent. No one thing hath failed  
‘ of all the good things which the Lord your  
‘ God

‘ God hath spoken. The Lord is abundant  
 ‘ in goodness and in truth. The heavens  
 ‘ declare his wonders, and his faithfulness is  
 ‘ in the congregation of his saints. Mercy  
 ‘ and truth go before his face; his loving-  
 ‘ kindness will he not take from his people,  
 ‘ nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. The Lord  
 ‘ is good, and his truth endureth to all gene-  
 ‘ rations. The works of his hands are verity  
 ‘ and uprightness; they are done in truth and  
 ‘ wisdom—and happy is he whose hope is  
 ‘ in the Lord his God, who regardeth truth  
 ‘ for evermore.’

Now this opens a way to **CONFIDENCE**,  
 and brings the mind to rest. In the sixty-  
 fifth of Isaiah, at the sixteenth verse, God is  
 twice stiled, *Elohe Amen\**, *the God of Truth*,  
 or, *Amen*. The God who is Truth itself, Faith-  
 fulness itself, Stability itself, and therefore con-  
 fidently and eternally to be relied on. If you  
 build your hope and your trust upon him, ac-  
 cording to his word, you cannot fail; you can-  
 not be disappointed. All nature shall change.

\* He who blesteth himself in the earth, shall bless himself



The mountains and the hills shall be removed. The world itself shall be destroyed. The heavens above shall wax old, as doth a garment. The sun shall be darkened. The moon shall be turned into blood. The stars shall fall to the ground, just as a fig-tree casteth her untimely fruit when she is shaken of a mighty wind. The elements shall melt with fervent heat. All this beautiful frame of things, which now salutes our eyes and gladdens our hearts, shall be dissolved, and all visible nature shall faint and die; but the *Elohe Amen* will remain, the same great, the same glorious, the same faithful, the same happy, the same good, and the same all-sufficient Being, to bless and to felicitate his people, throughout eternity.

No wonder then that we meet with such expressions as the following in the sacred scriptures—“ *It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.*” And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in THEE. Blessed is the man that maketh the LORD his trust. My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation

“ tation is from him. He only is my rock  
 “ and my salvation ; he is my defence : I shall  
 “ not be moved. In God is my salvation and  
 “ my glory : he is the rock of my strength ;  
 “ and my refuge is in God. The righteous  
 “ shall be glad in the Lord ; and shall trust in  
 “ him ; and all the upright in heart shall  
 “ glory.”

In the fourth place, We should be instructed by the word of our text, that the *Elohe Amen*, the God of truth, requires all who approach him in duty, to approach him with a true heart and in faithfulness of soul. It should remind us, that as God is a spirit of purity and truth, so all they that would worship him acceptably,  
 “ must worship him in spirit and in truth ;  
 “ for the Father seeketh such to worship  
 “ him,” and no other can approach him with acceptance.

“ *Bring no more vain oblations,*” says he to hypocritical worshippers ; “ *your incense is an*  
 “ *abomination to me : I cannot away with it.*  
 “ Your appointed feasts my soul hateth.  
 “ When ye spread forth your hands, I will  
 “ hide

“hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye  
 “make many prayers, I will not hear.—Wash  
 “ye, make you clean, put away the evil of  
 “your doings from before mine eyes—Cease  
 “to do evil, learn to do well—Seek judgment,  
 “relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless,  
 “plead for the widow.—Come now, and let  
 “us reason together, saith the Lord ; though  
 “your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white  
 “as snow ; though they be red like crimson,  
 “they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and  
 “obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land :  
 “but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured  
 “with the sword ; for the mouth of the LORD  
 “hath spoken it\*.”

In the fifth place, We are taught by the  
 text, that the God who first commanded the  
 use of the solemn word, *Amen*, and who is  
 himself the *Elohe AMEN*, the great God of  
 truth, who is perfect Veracity itself, and un-  
 changeable in holiness and truth—from the text  
 we may learn, that this God will abhor false-  
 hood and lies wherever he beholds them.

\* Isai. i.

It is well known that there is a great deal of this kind of wickedness in the world. But there is reason to suspect more of it than appears to every beholder. In this sin men study secrecy. Honest and decent people, in all ages, have agreed to brand lying with a curse : and therefore the generality of men have endeavoured to keep free from the imputation of a crime which, in words at least, is universally detested.

The earth has been burdened with creatures, who have not only owned, but even gloried in, some of the vilest and most debasing vices of which human nature can be supposed capable ; and yet, I believe, there are but few, if any, instances of a man's proclaiming himself a Liar.—The worst of men wish to have their words credited, whether they speak truth or falsehood ; and they cannot but know, that were they to profess themselves abandoned to the latter, none would ever afterwards depend upon them for the former. And having thus lost all credit, they could expect nothing better, than to be treated with contemptuous neglect, or to be hissed from society ; for no liar is fit for company.

And



And if not fit for the society of man, what must he be in the estimation of God? He is an abomination. The Lord “hates a lying tongue. The Lord hath a controversy with them that delight in lying. The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped, and a lying tongue is but for a moment.” God hath commanded men “not to lie one to another.” These are the things, says he, that ye shall do; “speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour\*.” And if we would enquire who shall abide in his tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill—the answer is, “He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.” On the contrary, we are assured that, “All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death†.”

This is agreeable to God’s holy character, intimated to us by the word, *Amen*; which signifies *true* and *faithful*; and would teach us what manner of people we ought to be, if we would enjoy the Divine Favour, either in this

\* Zech. viii. 16.      † Rev. xxi. 8.

world,

world, or in that which is to come. And we should do well to receive the admonition, and endeavour to profit by it, every time we repeat our text. In this way, we should approve ourselves the sincere disciples of the true and faithful Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. This leads me to speak

II. Of the word *Amen*, as it particularly respects Jesus the Saviour. And I begin with observing, That it was with him a word of asseveration. Thus for instance, Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of his followers, and said, *Amen*, that is, as it is translated into our language, “*Verily*, I  
 “ say unto you, Except ye be converted and  
 “ become as little children, ye shall not enter  
 “ into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever  
 “ therefore,” it is added, “ shall humble him-  
 “ self, as this little child, the same is greatest  
 “ in the kingdom of heaven\*.”

And again ; in the third chapter of John’s gospel, at the third verse, Jesus said unto

\* Matt. xviii. 3, &c.

Nicodemus,

Nicodemus, *Amen, Amen*\*; that is, “ Verily,  
 “ verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be  
 “ born again, he cannot see the kingdom of  
 “ God.” In the fifth verse of this chapter, you  
 again find the words, *Verily, verily*; that is,  
 in the language in which Christ spoke, *Amen,*  
*Amen.*

We see then, that by this expression Jesus  
 Christ was wont to ratify and confirm his  
 doctrine; and this must give us an high idea  
 of the importance of the word, *Amen*; and  
 still adds more and more strength to what hath  
 been already said upon this subject. It imparts  
 new vigour to this idea, that the word is  
 strongly expressive of truth and faithfulness.  
 But,

In the second place, We are informed, that  
 the promises of God are Yea and *Amen* in  
 Christ Jesus. This very remarkable expres-  
 sion occurs in St. Paul’s second epistle to the  
 Corinthians, and first chapter. “ As God  
 “ is true,” saith the Apostle, “ our word,”

\* Αμην, Αμην, λεγω σοι.

or preaching, "toward you, was not yea and  
 "nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ,  
 "who was preached among you by us, was  
 "not yea and nay, but in Him was yea.  
 "For all the promises of God in Him are  
 "yea, and in Him *Amen*, unto the glory of  
 "God."

To the mere English reader, there may be something obscure in this passage. The word, *Amen*, not being translated, it may not seem easy to fix the exact sense. The general idea, however, is that which has been so often mentioned already; that is, Truth and Faithfulness. The apostle here designed to administer consolation to the believing Corinthians, by assuring them, that all the kind and gracious promises which were found in the book of God, were secured in the hands of a Mediator. That the blessings they contained were as certain in promise as though the performance was passed; and that, however unworthy they might feel themselves in consequence of having formerly offended their Creator, yet as true believers in Christ, and true penitents through faith in his blood, and as persons now truly

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humble



humble and obedient, all the promises of the Bible, in favour of their souls, and of their whole interest, should be fulfilled in their season : for Jesus had died on their account, and God their Father had accepted the sacrifice which he had made ; and therefore “ all the “ promises of God in Him were yea, and in “ Him *Amen*, to the glory of God,” and the good of their souls.

It deserves our serious attention, that no blessing is to be expected from God, out of Christ ; but all desirable blessings may be expected by true believers in him. In the passage just read, St. Paul declares that all the “ promises ” of God are “ yea and *Amen* “ in Christ.” And we learn by this same Apostle, that even the performance of God’s *oath* to his people, is to be expected in the same way ; which will be seen by reading a few verses at the close of the sixth chapter to the Hebrews, and considering them in their connected sense.

“ Men verily swear by the greater,” saith the Apostle ; “ and an oath for confirmation “ is

“ is to them an end of all strife. Wherein  
 “ God willing more abundantly to shew unto  
 “ the heirs of promise the immutability of his  
 “ counsel, *confirmed it by an oath\**. That  
 “ by

\* I am willing to *make* an opportunity here to say something respecting the solemnity of an oath, and the manner in which it ought to be administered, among men. An oath is a direct and solemn appeal to Almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, for the truth of what we say. Or, it is a calling God to witness, that what we affirm is literally and verily true. Consequently, the utmost caution, the greatest sincerity and the strictest regard to right in this high act of religion, are necessary in him that swears. And hence I infer, that, as no man should take an oath, but on lawful and necessary occasions, so those who administer it, should perform that solemn office in a manner calculated to strike, not only the person immediately concerned, but also every spectator, with religious awe. The manner in which oaths are often administered and taken in judicial courts, is highly improper and truly distressing. This sacred, this very solemn business is frequently so conducted, as to give to the whole an air of formality, or mere custom; though in this action the great God of the Universe is appealed to, and immortal souls stake their eternal welfare. This has been matter of long and just lamentation with the thoughtful and good. And if I mistake not, it has been recommended by some one, though my memory does not help me to recollect by whom, that when an oath is to be administered in a court of judicature, all present should rise, in honour to that august Being in whose tremendous name men swear, and for the purpose of impressing on every mind an awe of GOD, and a dread of

“ by two immutable things, in which it was  
 “ impossible for God to lie, we might have  
 “ strong consolation, who have fled for refuge  
 “ to lay hold upon the hope set before us :  
 “ which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,  
 “ both sure and stedfast, and which entereth  
 “ into that within the vail—whither the fore-  
 “ runner is for us entered, even Jesus, made  
 “ an high priest for ever after the order of  
 “ Melchisedec.”

Here you may perceive, that the benefit of the oath is to those who have “ fled,” or shall flee, “ for refuge to the hope set before them” in the Gospel ; which refuge is Jesus Christ, through whom God is pleased to shew mercy to believing and penitent people : and the “ strong consolation” here spoken of, appears

offending him by a false appeal to omniscience. Whether this be the *best* amendment that can be adopted, I leave more capable judges to determine. But that *some* amendment should take place, is as clearly the voice of prudence as of piety, since, as St. Paul observes, “ an oath for confirmation “ is to men an end of all strife,” and is their last resort in the most difficult and interesting cases, our property, our liberty and our life may depend upon men’s being well informed of the nature, and strictly conscientious in the use, of an OATH.

to

to belong to them, and to them only, who obtain an interest in the blessings arising from the humble life and painful death of that Mediator, in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in whom they are *Amen*. Sacrifices and offerings, law and gospel, prophets and apostles, agree in this general truth, that pardon, peace and every spiritual favour and blessing, come from God to fallen man, through, and *only* through, Christ Jesus, the great Mediator.

‘ In the days of man’s innocence, while he  
 ‘ was yet but little lower than the angels,  
 ‘ he conversed with God, without shame or  
 ‘ terror, face to face. But when, by his fatal  
 ‘ transgression, he had fallen from that happi-  
 ‘ ness in which he was created, he was excluded  
 ‘ from this exalted intercourse.’ . . . . .  
 But—‘ We behold the promise of a Redeemer  
 ‘ given to our first parents immediately after  
 ‘ the fall, in obscure and general terms. It  
 ‘ foretold a victory that would be gained over  
 ‘ the enemy that had deceived and conquered  
 ‘ them ; a victory the most illustrious in its  
 ‘ effects and consequences.’ . . . . . ‘ God  
 ‘ promised our first parents, that *the seed of the*  
A a 3
‘ *woman*



‘ *woman should bruise the serpent’s head.* He  
 ‘ promised the patriarch Abraham, that *in his*  
 ‘ *seed all the families of the earth should be*  
 ‘ *blessed.* The manner of this divine dispen-  
 ‘ sation has been different in different periods :  
 ‘ but the same spirit breathes in all, and in all  
 ‘ the same object is pursued, recovery from  
 ‘ the guilt and misery of sin, *through the mercy*  
 ‘ *of God displayed in a Mediator.*—This is the  
 ‘ basis of the evangelical covenant : and this  
 ‘ glorious doctrine is coeval with revelation.

‘ Under the law the great truths of the Gos-  
 ‘ pel, which were amply to be revealed in future  
 ‘ times, were shadowed forth in sacrificial rites,  
 ‘ and other expressive ceremonies, well adapted  
 ‘ to answer the purposes of a preparatory in-  
 ‘ stitution. Yet the law of Moses, considered  
 ‘ in a separate view, made no provision for the  
 ‘ future pardon of moral guilt ; and afforded  
 ‘ no promise or hope of future happiness. But  
 ‘ though the covenant made with Moses for  
 ‘ one particular people, and for a determined  
 ‘ period of time, contained no gracious pro-  
 ‘ mises of forgiveness in another life, yet the  
 ‘ patriarchs and holy men of old were not  
 ‘ destitute

' destitute of such hopes. From whence  
 ' could those hopes arise? From whence, but  
 ' from that more general covenant of grace,  
 ' published to Adam immediately after his  
 ' fall, renewed with Noah, with Abraham,  
 ' with David: the covenant which from them  
 ' was delivered down to future generations by  
 ' uninterrupted tradition; attested by the con-  
 ' current evidence of the prophets; typified by  
 ' all the sacrifices throughout the world; and  
 ' particularly amongst the Jews: and in the ful-  
 ' nefs of time, completed and finally established  
 ' by the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the  
 ' great Mediator of this covenant; who fulfilled  
 ' on *our account* all its conditions; died to seal  
 ' its promises with his blood; rose again to  
 ' demonstrate the efficacy of his sacrifice; and  
 ' ever liveth *to make intercession for us?*

' It is evident that the law of Moses in its  
 ' various institutions had a reference to some  
 ' future dispensation; and that from the object  
 ' to which they pointed, they derived all their  
 ' consequence and utility, Ablutions of the  
 ' body were a significant and religious exercise,  
 ' when they were performed *with an eye to*  
 ' *the*

‘ *the sanctification of the heart*, and the puri-  
 ‘ fying the affections from natural or acquired  
 ‘ pollutions. Sacrifices and offerings were  
 ‘ useful and instructive rites, when considered  
 ‘ as evidences of the divine displeasure against  
 ‘ sin ; and as bearing a reference to the sacri-  
 ‘ fice of the Messiah, *who was to be cut off,*  
 ‘ *but not for himself.* In him, and the great  
 ‘ Atonement made by offering up of his own  
 ‘ body on the cross, all the sacrifices of the  
 ‘ law received their completion\*.’ “ The law  
 “ was given by Moses, but grace and truth,”  
 in an emphatical and illustrious manner, “ came  
 “ by JESUS CHRIST†.” And, to say all in  
 a word, and to administer every possible degree  
 of consolation to the believing mind, St. Paul  
 assures Christians, that “ God will supply ALL  
 “ their need, according to his riches in glory,  
 “ by CHRIST JESUS‡.”

In the third place, I must remark, That  
 Jesus Christ himself is called, *The Amen.*—

\* I hope no apology will be judged necessary for this quo-  
 tation, long as it is, from Dr. White’s celebrated Bampton  
 Lectures.

† John i. 17.      ‡ Phil. iv. 19.

This

This is one of his high and honourable appellations, to which we should do well to take heed. Perhaps, you may not, all of you, have been aware, that every time you pronounce the word, *Amen*, you pronounce one of the names of the Son of God, the great and blessed Redeemer of the faithful.—The passage of Scripture in which he is so called, I shall quote to you, from the third chapter of the Revelations. These are the words of the sacred writer.—“Unto the angel of the church  
 “of the Laodiceans write; These things saith  
 “the *Amen, the faithful and true Witness*, the  
 “*beginning of the creation of God*; I know  
 “thy works, that thou art neither cold nor  
 “hot—So then because thou art lukewarm,  
 “I will spue thee out of my mouth: because  
 “thou sayest, I am rich,” (that is, spiritually rich,) “and increased with goods, and have  
 “need of nothing; and knowest not that thou  
 “art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and  
 “blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy  
 “of me gold tried in the fire, that thou  
 “mayest be rich; and white raiment, that  
 “thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame  
 “of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint  
 “thine



“ thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest  
“ see.

“ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten :  
“ be zealous therefore, and repent. These  
“ things saith the *Amen*, the faithful and  
“ true witness.”—Here you will take notice,  
that the pleasing idea of truth, faithfulness and  
certainty is still kept up. And Christ’s name  
of *Amen*, and of “ faithful and true witness,”  
agrees well with what he said to his disciples—  
I am the way, and the truth, and “ the  
“ life : no man cometh unto the Father, but  
“ by me.—Let not your heart be troubled ;  
“ ye believe in God, believe also in me. In  
“ my Father’s house are many mansions ; if  
“ it were not so, I would have told you. I  
“ go to prepare a place for you\*.”

Thus you see, Christians, the connection  
between Christ, and the word *Amen*, and I  
wish it may ever be remembered by you, that  
Christ’s assuming that word as one of his  
names or titles, hath put such a dignity upon

\* John xiv.

it, as would render it particularly blamable in any of his people to utter it carelessly, and without a meaning.

This introduces our Third Head, under which I am to shew, How this word respects us, as to its use. And the first remark I make upon this part of my subject is, that this word requires the exercise of the understanding. In general, it may be observed, that *no* word should be used ignorantly in the worship of God. And what is true of words in general, is true of this in particular. Accordingly, St. Paul says—"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.—Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say *Amen*, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest\*?"—Hence it appears, that the first requisite to a right use of this word is, a thorough understanding of the subject to which it is annexed.

\* 1 Cor. xiv.

And

And the reason is this, every act of religion, should be an act of the understanding, from beginning to end, for God “hath no pleasure “in the sacrifice of fools.”

In the second place, The word, *Amen*, implies the consent of the heart, whenever it is uttered by the tongue. This is clear from a vast variety of scriptures, as well as from common usage.

In the fifth of Numbers, where we first meet with the word, it was commanded to be pronounced by any woman suspected of, and tried for, breach of chastity. If guilty, the priest, among other things, was instructed to say, “the Lord make thee a curse among thy “people.” And the woman was to say, in reply, *Amen, Amen*. Again; In the twenty-seventh of Deuteronomy, where curses are pronounced against transgressors of various descriptions, all the people of Israel were required to answer and say, *Amen*.—In the last verse of the eighty-ninth Psalm, we have these sweet and animating words—“Blessed be the Lord for “evermore. *Amen, and Amen*.” And in  
common

common speech, every one knows the signification of this word. When you say, *Amen*, to any thing that is proposed to you, you mean, ' Let it be so. I agree to it.' And sometimes, you must be sensible, this word denotes the ardency of the speaker's heart, and the fervor of his wishes.

Hence I remark, in the third place, That this word is placed at the end or conclusion of prayers, to be a sign of our hearty assent and consent to what hath been said. So that by the expression, *Amen*, if we know what we do, and do as we ought, we sum up our desires and wishes; our petitions and praises; our confessions and resolutions; and in this one word we do, as it were, say over and pray over the whole of what we had said before. By it we renew our supplications for divine grace, our grief for all past sin, our longing desire to be delivered from the power of sin, our thanksgivings for Jesus Christ, and our solemn determinations that, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we will faithfully love and serve God to the end of life.

Improve-



Improvement. First ; Let us endeavour to imprint upon our minds the use and meaning of the word, *Amen*, which is so often upon our lips. Let us endeavour to use it rightly at a throne of grace. Whenever we utter it before God, let us reflect what relation it hath to him and his attributes. And as it particularly leads our thoughts to his Truth, let us pray to him to make us the children of truth, that he may own and bless us.

Secondly ; As it respects Jesus Christ, let us often reflect, what a faithful Mediator we have, and let true believers rely on him accordingly. And as this word marks out Christ to be the “ True and Faithful Witness,” let us all reflect,

Thirdly ; That he will be a true and faithful witness, in the solemn day of judgment, *against* all who now despise, slight, neglect, or disobey, his Gospel. He is the Son of God, and the Judge of men, and will vindicate his Father’s honour in the punishment of evil doers, as well as glorify his goodness in the salvation of them that do well.

Fourthly ;

Fourthly ; As the word, *Amen*, signifies the consent of the mind, we ought to be very careful how we add that word as a mark of approbation to any thing said by another in our hearing. Let me beseech you, in the solemn name of God, your Almighty Judge, never to say *Amen* to any thing profane ; to any thing obscene, impure or unholy ; to any thing spiteful or revengeful, or, to any word or sentiment that is contrary to truth and goodness, lest by this means you become “partakers of other men’s sins,” and finally have your lot with the wicked. I am apprehensive that many, for want of caution herein, have involved their own souls in guilt, and encouraged others to proceed in an evil course and plunge themselves deeper in vice and misery. Take heed this be not *your* condemnation.

Fifthly ; Let us reflect, how often we have vowed we would be the Lord’s, to serve and honour him, by the use of the word, *Amen*. O ! that we may from this moment be properly concerned to “perform unto the Lord “our vows !”

Alk

All our promises, our resolutions and our vows are recorded in heaven, and will appear either for or against us at the last day. Let us therefore seriously reflect on all our sacred obligations, and, with a humble dependence on the Spirit of grace and truth, faithfully endeavour to discharge them. From the present to the concluding moment of life, "Herein let us exercise ourselves, always to keep a conscience VOID of OFFENCE, both towards God, and towards men."

Lastly. The Lord Jesus, "the faithful and true Witness saith, surely, I come quickly : the answer is, *Amen*. Even so, come Lord Jesus\*." And the short prayer which follows, that "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ might be with all," who read or hear the words of this prophecy, is, in the words of good Mr. Reader, 'As though our apostle had said, whatever you forget, do not forget this one word, *Quickly*; and that you may not, as his minister, I thankfully take it from the lips of my Master, and his

\* See Rev. xxii. 20.

' angel;

‘ angel ; and oh ! that God would found it  
 ‘ out so loud, as to drown the noise of every  
 ‘ intruding vanity ; for *He who testifies these*  
 ‘ solemn and glorious things, *saith, surely I*  
 ‘ *come quickly* by death to every individual, to  
 ‘ seal up the ear that now hears these words,  
 ‘ and at the final judgment I shall come quickly  
 ‘ to all. Reader, are you ready ? Can you  
 ‘ welcome him ? Where is the heart that  
 ‘ says *Amen* to this declaration ? Can the  
 ‘ creatures whom he came to save, with his  
 ‘ continued absence or delay ? At least, says  
 ‘ our apostle, my heart replies *Amen ; even so*  
 ‘ *come Lord Jesus* quickly as thou hast said ;  
 ‘ for what have I here, as from the earth, but  
 ‘ what is mingled with sin and sorrow ? I long,  
 ‘ I pant for thy presence too, my Dear All in  
 ‘ All ! My life is hid with thee in God ! Oh !  
 ‘ for complete salvation ! Come, my Lord,  
 ‘ come quickly. *My flesh and my heart cry*  
 ‘ *out for the living God.* And while thy cha-  
 ‘ riot yet delays, I will imitate the mercy to  
 ‘ which I owe all my hopes ; and, with an  
 ‘ eye lifted up to God, and a hand stretched  
 ‘ out to men, with all the fervour of a christian,  
 ‘ I will say officially as a minister of salvation ;



‘ may *the* illuminating, quickening, trans-  
 ‘ forming, sanctifying, comforting and pre-  
 ‘ serving *grace*, which is in and *of our Lord*  
 ‘ *Jesus Christ*, treasured up in him for the use  
 ‘ of dying sinners, *be with you all* ; to form  
 ‘ every power and faculty divine, so that you  
 ‘ may perceive your heaven begun ; and be  
 ‘ able to shed the light and glory of the great  
 ‘ salvation all around you—and that the glo-  
 ‘ rious *Amen*, JESUS, to whom these last  
 ‘ words of scripture are a solemn prayer, may  
 ‘ grant in our favour this apostolic request, I  
 ‘ intreat my reader to join me heartily in this  
 ‘ concluding Prayer.

‘ Blessed God ! Forgive whatever has been  
 ‘ offensive to thee, in the spirit of the writer  
 ‘ or reader of this piece : and, if it may be  
 ‘ the will of God, suffer no man to read it  
 ‘ wholly in vain ; or without growing in grace,  
 ‘ and in the knowledge of our Lord and Sa-  
 ‘ viour Jesus. If knowledge is, in ever so  
 ‘ small a degree, increased, let it not *puff up*  
 ‘ any man ; but kindle upon the altar of every  
 ‘ heart that *love* which *edifieth* : and even now  
 ‘ give us by faith the substance of the things  
 ‘ hoped

‘ hoped for ; and such a present intercourse  
 ‘ with eternal scenes, as may disarm the temp-  
 ‘ tations of life ; that so God in all things may  
 ‘ be glorified, through Jesus Christ ; to whom  
 ‘ be glory and dominion for ever and ever.  
 ‘ *Amen\**.’

To conclude. Through the gracious aids  
 of Almighty God, may we, the writer, the  
 hearers and the readers, of these Lectures, be  
 enabled hereafter *so* to live, that when Christ  
 saith, “ Behold ! I come quickly ” to take you  
 off by the stroke of death, we may cheerfully  
 reply, *Amen*. *Even so ; come LORD JESUS,*  
*come quickly. AMEN and AMEN.*

\* Close of ‘ Remarks on the prophetic part of the Revela-  
 ‘ tion of St. John : especially the three last trumpets.’ By  
 the Rev. Thomas Reader of Taunton.

APPEN-

## A P P E N D I X.

**T**HE Author of the foregoing Lectures cannot in conscience permit this book to pass into the world, without entering his Protest against all the cruelties of the Slave Trade, and expressing his wish, in unison with thousands beside, that a traffic so repugnant to humanity, so highly disgraceful to a people professing Christianity, may be prudently and speedily abolished.—In duty he also declares against every species of cruelty practised in our own land. The oppressions of wealth and power; the “grinding the faces of the poor\*,” the cruelty of masters to servants and apprentices; the cruelties of servants, and indeed all sorts of inconsiderate people, to cattle, and especially to Horses; the barbarous diversions of Bull-baiting and Cock-fighting; and the cruelties of children to that sorely afflicted animal, the Ass, as well as to birds, insects, &c. mangling the limbs of the former, and sticking pins in the

\* Isai. iii. 5. See also James v. 1—6.

latter,

latter, frequently torturing them several hours before life is exhausted—These are evils which cry aloud in compassion's ear, and call for speedy and effectual redress. I pray God to put it into the heart of every man that casts an eye on these lines, faithfully to use his best and most extensive influence to lessen cruelty and misery on the earth; and may the Father of Mercies succeed his endeavours, and abundantly bless his own soul.

F I N I S.



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